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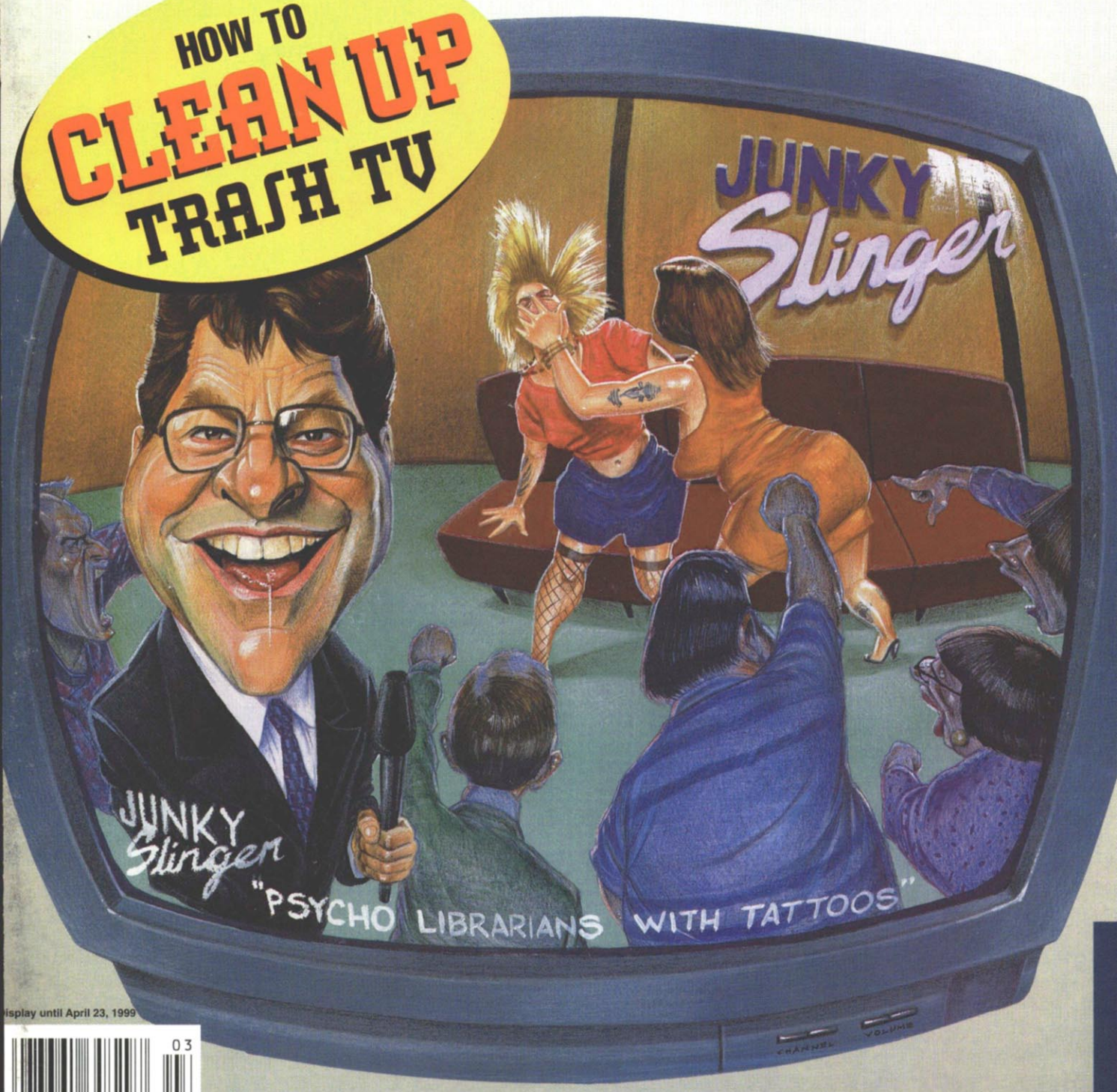

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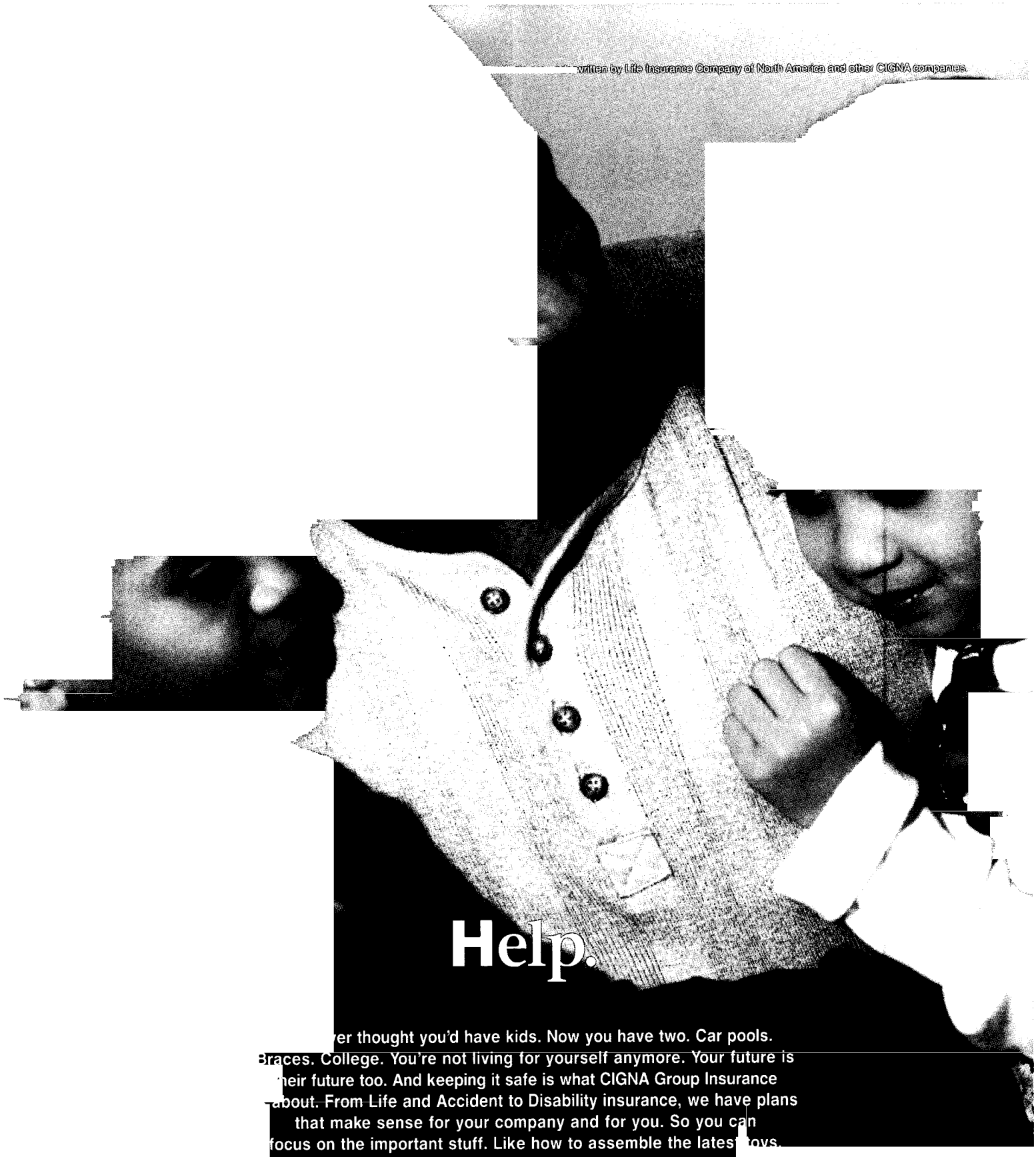

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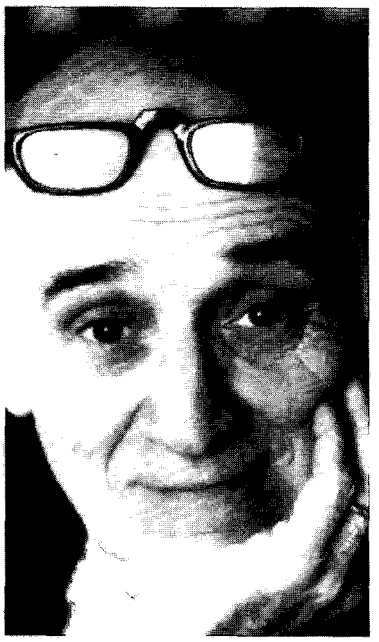

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THE AMERICAN ENTERPRISE

A National Magazine of Politics, Business, and Culture

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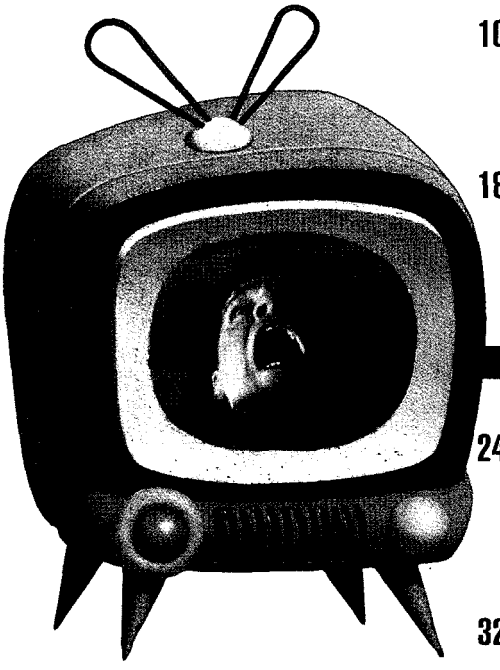

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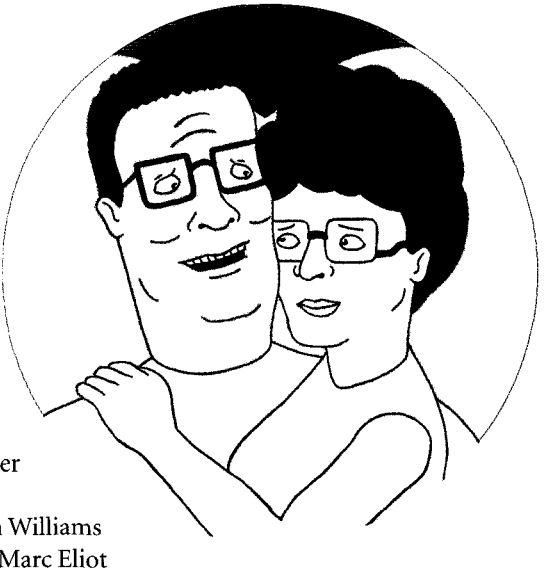

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Joel Kotkin, Eli Lehrer, Deroy Murdock
Ralph Reiland, Ben Stein, Frederick Turner

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"The Mail," The American Enterprise,
1150 17th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036,
or fax (202) 862-5867, or e-mail
TheAmericanEnterprise@compuserve.com.

WEB PAGE
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PRODUCTION AND BUSINESS OFFICE
The American Enterprise
1150 17th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.
(202) 862-5886.

OFFICE OF THE EDITOR IN CHIEF
The American Enterprise
23 Hurd Street, Cazenovia, NY 13035.
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Bird's Eye

Karl Zinsmeister

Taking Out the TV Trash

Forget all the studies and psychological theories and research data. The simplest proof that television programming has spun out of control is what happened to me in the Cazenovia Public Library.

The articles you are about to read grow out of a live conference staged in Washington, D.C. by *The American Enterprise* and the Center for Media and Public Affairs. We wanted to look closely at where TV programming is heading, so we decided to make a documentary video that would splice together clips from a wide range of shows broadcast over the last year or two. Rather than presuming to tell our audience whether the national airwaves are healthy or polluted, we would show them what's out there and let them decide for themselves.

After all, lots of Americans busy with their families and careers have only a misty sense of what's now on TV beyond their own favorite programs. I was surprised myself, as we got into this intensive study, to learn just how far standards have declined in the last year or two.

When we started working on the video script I asked Bob Lichter and Daniel Amundson, with whom I was collaborating on the conference, to send samples of controversial shows from their large television archive. The videocassettes started to arrive and I needed to find some place to review them, because we don't own a TV and, having just moved to a new community, I don't have a buddy next door whose VCR I can commandeer. No problem, I thought, I'll use the equipment at our public library.

Bad mistake. I walked in, made my request, and was shown to the video player. Not a TV-on-a-cart in a back office as I expected, but rather a full-wall projection unit in the children's room that is normally used to screen "Curious George" and "Winnie the Pooh" tapes. What I had in my bag was something different.

As the sweet white-haired lady warmed up the equipment I cast my eye at the huge screen, the kid's furnishings, the glass door, and the browsers milling in the library just outside of it. I began to get a little sweaty.

Figuring an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure I started to explain that this was just network TV, but that some of the tapes might be a little crude, that this nice professor in Washington was sending them to me for RESEARCH, you see, and...oh, well, the first one was already rolling.

I'm sorry, but I didn't realize that actors now throw off the f-word on cable sitcoms. I didn't realize that remarkably graphic depictions of oral sex can now occur in shows airing at 9:30 P.M. I didn't realize you can stumble across realistic human dissections on today's major networks. Just as the clips from the cable soft-porn shows started I leapt for the off switch and skedaddled, before someone decided to call in a therapist or a sheriff's deputy to talk to the new guy in town.

These, mind you, weren't blue movies purchased in unmarked paper wrappers, but everyday broadcast television, the kind of stuff that is pumped into American living rooms every single week. Kind of amazing, isn't it, that daily TV has become something too warped to play in a community library?

Let me reassure you, we're not complaining here that the skirts have gotten too short on "Good Morning America," or that the Roadrunner is dropping too many anvils on the Coyote. The stuff the authors in this issue are concerned about goes way be-

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THE FICTION THAT SEX, VIOLENCE, AND SHOCK APPEAL ARE THE KEYS TO ENTERTAINMENT PROFITABILITY NEEDS TO BE PUT TO REST.

yond that. There are things on TV today—lots of them—that will trouble almost any sane human being.

Crude-to-anti-social TV is not a new problem. But in the last year or so the problem has ratcheted up to freshly alarming levels. Whole new depths of vulgarity, whole new levels of graphic excess, are now being plumbed on screen.

The perpetrators aren't subtle. A Fox marketing slogan this past fall went: "We ran the censors off, and boy does it show!" Over on CBS, the debut episode of the "Howard Stern Show" featured naked lesbians (lightly fuzzified), a phony clip of the President making obscene remarks, and a segment where a real woman recovering from brain surgery begged for free plastic surgery by agreeing to take off her shirt.

The unprecedented deluge of rubbish in the 1998-99 TV season has gotten even jaded metropolitan writers concerned. We've extracted in this issue worried articles from the front pages of the *New York Times,* the *Wall Street Journal,* and *U.S. News.* The *Los Angeles Times*, not exactly Jerry Falwell's newspaper, recently warned that the current season has given viewers "a pungent whiff of the smelly underpants" of television's programmers.

It isn't just random observation that tells us something is awry. It's hard data. Research by the Kaiser Family Foundation finds that fully three-quarters of all shows *in the 8-9 P.M. family hour* now contain "sexually related talk or behavior." That is four times the amount aired in 1976. Outside the family hour, the sleaze is even worse.

TV's producers tell us this is what consumers want. Don't believe it. In Gallup polls, 59 percent of Americans complain that TV has changed for the worse in recent years; just 30 percent say it has gotten better. Viewers were far happier back in the tamer mid-'60s, when 23 percent said TV was getting worse, and 50 percent said better.

Attempts have been made recently to do something about TV's descent into gutter programming. And they haven't worked. Specifically, the new ratings system hammered out to help parents has been sabotaged by the networks. The broadcasters have been allowed to rate themselves, rather than having some objective outside body do the job, and they're cheating like mad. Another Kaiser Family Foundation study discovered that fully 92 percent of programs containing sexual matter didn't carry the "S" rating they are supposed to; 79 percent of programs depicting violence weren't marked with a "V." And 91 percent of shows with crude language lacked an "L" label. "The way the system works now, parents can't rely on the ratings to flag sexual material or violent content," said Vicky Rideout of Kaiser.

One reason this matters is because the so-called "V-chips" now being built into TV sets to give consumers the ability to block out categories of entertainment they find offensive will only work if the content is first accurately labeled by the rater. You can punch in the code to zap programs with vile language, but if the network decides "kill the b----" doesn't deserve an "L," that's coming down the pipe to your armchair, or kid's bedroom, anyway.

One way a significant number of concerned Americans are dealing with this sleaziness is by simply walking away. Two million households have abandoned TV altogether. Others are just turning it on less (cultural conservatives especially). That's why a marketing survey released this fall found that among people who now watch two or more sitcoms regularly, only one out of five are Republican supporters. The conscientious objecters have gone elsewhere.

In fact, lots of people—of many different stripes—have gone elsewhere. When the latest broad Nielsen ratings came out near the end of 1998, they showed that an average of 52 million viewers watched ABC, NBC, CBS, and Fox during the previous month. That is a decline of four million viewers—or 8 percent—from the same period one year earlier. Some of those folks peeled off to cable offerings, but lots just found better things to do. They logged onto a computer, watched videotapes, read record numbers of books, got out of the house. University of Michigan research, meanwhile, shows that daily TV watching by children has recently fallen for the first time, by an average of about 12 percent.

There are other hints that some consumers have had it with today's TV excesses. Last I checked, something like a dozen local affiliates have canceled CBS's "Howard Stern Show," including stations in San Diego, Phoenix, Ft. Myers, Birmingham, Knoxville, St. Louis, and Portland, Oregon.

There is also encouraging evidence that a different kind of trash backlash may be building. As we discuss on pages 39-41, some large-scale television advertisers are beginning to say enough is enough. A spokesman for Procter & Gamble was recently quoted in *Advertising Age* complaining that whereas the company had no problem in years past finding quality family programming to sponsor, "lately the search is more difficult, in part because more adult programming is invading earlier time slots." Driven by management dissatisfaction (at levels right up to CEO) with current programming options, P&G and a significant number of other advertising heavyweights—like Johnson and Johnson, Sears Roebuck, Ford, and IBM, each of whom spends hundreds of millions of dollars annually on TV ads—are now organizing to encourage more winsome, less decadent shows.

Magazine editors can howl at the moon about TV trash without any certainty of having an effect. But if advertisers begin to push their money in different directions, then there *will* be noticeable results. Advertiser pressure needs to be encouraged, and where necessary demanded—for it is these large corporations who ultimately foot the bills for all of today's TV programming.

One point critics of TV sleaze have tried hard to pound into their opponents' heads, so far without much success, is that a shift in the direction of more wholesome

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and constructive programming needn't undercut the economic success of the entertainment industry. A study released in January 1999 by the non-profit Dove Foundation revealed that over the ten-year period 1988–1997, the average G-rated film had five times the gross profit and a 31 percent higher return on investment than the average R-rated film. According to clinical psychologist and TV campaigner Madeline Levine, it costs a movie about $10 million on average to get an "R" rather than "PG-13" rating.

So guess how many films of the various types Hollywood went out and made over the last decade? Try 18 *times* more R-rated than G-rated films.

The dirty little secret of Hollywood is that lots of incredibly unprofitable amoral junk gets made solely because the story titillates some Brentwood producer. The producers say their products are carefully modulated to what Kansas demands, but that's often not true.

Guess what the guys who always chime in about how "entertainment is a hard-headed business" and about how they "can only sell what the people buy" said when presented with the results of the Dove study?

Tom Sherak, chairman of the 20th Century Fox Domestic Film Group, suddenly got all misty-eyed about artistic integrity and the importance of not putting dollar signs before principle. "We are in a creative business.... The creative element has to be allowed to make the movie they want to make. The one thing you don't want to do is hurt the integrity of the movie."

Right. Don't worry about the integrity of the American culture, Tom. Just go ahead and inject a little anthrax into the national bloodstream every couple weeks. Put a match to your profits in the process. But whatever you do, don't tick off Oliver Stone.

We've tried hard in this issue not to be grumps, and to avoid mindlessly promulgating a Hollywood-is-Gomorrah caricature. You'll find descriptions of positive things now coming out of Hollywood and other TV production centers in a half-dozen different articles: in our LIVE interview, in our Horowitz-Medved debate, in Joel Kotkin's article and its sidebars, and in HOLLYWOOD REPORT. In earlier issues of this magazine we've pointed out that there are even some strong evangelical Christian factions in Hollywood (for instance, in corners of the Disney animation studio). Rotting our culture is definitely not the goal for these people. The problem is that TV's sane and ethical creators don't get the green light from their bosses as frequently as they ought to. Too often they actually have to hide their principles under a basket.

The fiction that sex, violence, and shock appeal are the keys to entertainment profitability needs to be put to rest. In the fortnight in which I am writing, the top rated show in all of America is "Touched by an Angel," a completely buff- and snuff-free weekly tale of redemption. Its creators had to fight their way onto the screen. The show was almost cancelled before it had a chance to build up its audience. Even after it became a blockbuster the chic set in Hollywood considered it a fluke rather than an exemplar. But eventually, the sheer, wild popularity of "Touched by an Angel" won the day, inspiring CBS to give other parts of its programming a somewhat more family-friendly feel, and leading the whole network to the top of today's ratings heap.

Another indicator of the huge public appetite for non-shocking TV is the smashing success of the Nickelodeon Network. From its very start, Nickelodeon has had strong content standards that ban sex, gratuitous violence, even "gratuitous grossness." And it has been repaid with the love of its audience and powerful gratitude from parents who get little support elsewhere on the TV dial. Voluminous market research shows that Nickelodeon's "safety" is the reason parents most appreciate it.

A theme that comes up again and again in this issue is the idea that entertainment producers should voluntarily set standards to keep debased programming off the public airwaves. (See, for instance, Steve Allen's article on page 38.) There is nothing censorious, uneconomic, or puritanical about the idea that companies should draw lines, individually and collectively, and say "below this we will not stoop." That is how the TV networks operated in their golden age. That's how Nickelodeon has built a sterling brand today. That could be the compromise that wins the public's trust and affection back for TV in the future. And the industry could do this for itself, on its own, tomorrow.

We certainly aren't wishing that every show on the airwaves be built around angelic deeds, friendly doctors, and furry creatures. I'm just saying: Don't give us the line about how the entertainment industry has to go bottom-feeding because wholesome programming doesn't pay.

There are signs that some TV programmers are at last beginning to figure this out. The new entertainment president of NBC gave a speech in January calling for less sex and more shows featuring "traditional families" in the future. He admitted viewers are telling him they "want to be able to watch TV with their kids," and suggested, in massive understatement, that "I think we could use a few more words between 'Hello' and 'Would you sleep with me.'" He also urged less reliance on New York City as a locale for shows, which would itself reduce on-screen hostility to traditional standards of decency.

Another encouraging sign along these lines is the recent launch of an entirely new national network—Pax TV—that promises it will be 100 percent sleaze-free, 24 hours a day. Read our interview with the impressive founders, on pages 18-23, to see what they're up to.

But ultimately it must be consumers (and advertisers) more than producers who will clean up TV. For there is no denying that Americans currently sit down to watch an unholy amount of crud they ought not.

A big problem is that, as writer Terry Mattingly puts it, "most Americans do not watch programs on TV that they have made decisions to watch, based on their values or even their interests. Most Americans watch TV to kill time, to make life go away in small stupid chunks."

That needs to change.

And it all starts, and ends, in *our* house.

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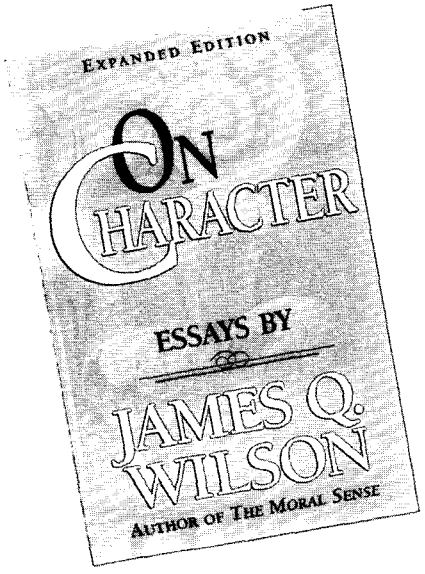

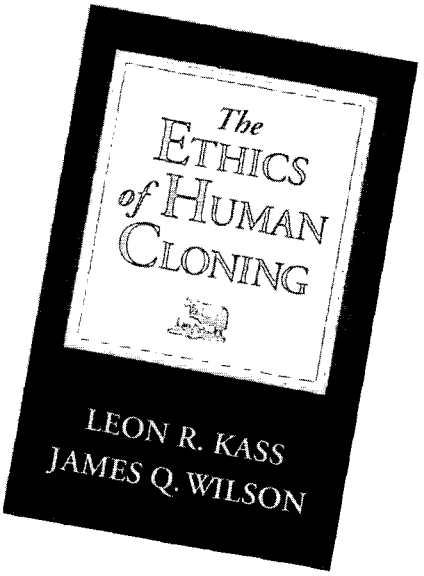

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Sidelights

The National Security Agency has banned **Furby** toys in its offices for fear their microchips will record secret information. ❧ Dogs suffering "separation anxiety" may now use an FDA-approved, meat-flavored pill billed as an antidepressant. ❧ New bumper sticker: "SAVE THE WHALES *till we get more tartar sauce*" ❧ MTV host **Carson Daly** says his Catholic faith "helps keep my priorities in check: I wasn't put on this planet to look cool on TV. I'm here to live my life the way God wants me to." · · · Former Christian Coalition head **Ralph Reed** wrote two jokes for an **Al Franken** TV show, but NBC censors cut one, the *Washington Post* reports. · · · "Simpsons" creator **Matt Groening**, long criticized for his smart-mouthed character Bart, now has "a seven-year-old boy and a nine-year-old boy; so all I can say is I apologize." · · · Rock star **George Michael**, recently arrested for indecency in a public restroom, dresses as a cop in a new MTV video that mocks his arrest and shows couples having sex in public. ❧ Two-thirds of college students told KPMG Peat Marwick surveyors they expect to retire by age 50. · · · The Bureau of Labor Statistics has a new record: The Fargo, North Dakota-Moorhead, Minnesota unemployment rate hit 0.9 percent in October. ❧ Intuit, which makes popular tax-preparation software, says its sales rose 34 percent in 1998; it expects "tremendous growth" this year. · · · "Tax cuts are no longer a partisan Republican concern," insists Senator **Robert Torricelli** (N.J.), who is co-sponsoring a bill to trim income taxes and capital gains taxes with Senator **Paul Coverdell** (R-Ga.). ❧ **Terry Ventura**, wife of Minnesota Governor **Jesse "The Body" Ventura**, says "It's not my role to be like **Hillary** [**Clinton**] and try to rule the world." ❧ The Centers for Disease Control warn that so-called organic foods are eight times likelier to pass on deadly *E. coli* bacteria because of the "natural" fertilizer—manure—used to grow them and the lack of modern sanitizing technology used to process them. · · · The CDC have also reported that alfalfa sprouts probably caused 20,000 Americans to suffer from salmonella in 1995. ❧ When the Pope recently visited St. Louis, 2,500 media credentials were issued, compared to about 700 during **Mark McGwire**'s record-setting home-run stretch, *Investor's Business Daily* reports. ❧ Pollsters for *Time* found that only 24 percent of women had a favorable opinion of feminist **Gloria Steinem**, and 56 percent of women said they were unfamiliar with her. ❧ The Census Bureau estimates that the number of unmarried couples living together has risen from fewer than half a million in 1960 to over 4 million today; a third of today's unwed couples have children under 15.

San Francisco officially recognizes Arab Americans as a minority eligible for affirmative action. · · · The Denny's restaurant chain, which paid $45.7 million in 1994 to settle a discrimination lawsuit with black customers, is required to post toll-free Justice Department numbers so patrons know where to file additional complaints. · · · Civil rights officials at the Department of Justice have forced an Illinois bar not to refuse drinks to patrons with an unsteady walk after a customer with Parkinson's sued the establishment. ❧ "Journalists' loss of standing must have something to do with the fact that they have emerged from relative anonymity, reporting less and talking more," concedes the *New York Times*' **R. W. Apple, Jr.** "I don't blame the man in the street for making very little distinction between what I do and what **Geraldo Rivera** does." · · · TV news anomalies noted by the Media Research Center: ABC's "Good Morning America" and CBS' "This Morning" invited **Larry Flynt** to discuss Republican philandering, but originally passed on **Gennifer Flowers**' story. Neither show interviewed Arkansas troopers on Governor **Clinton**'s affairs, but both invited persons making allegations against **Clarence Thomas** and **George Bush**. · · · All three major TV networks scanted this year's Senate trial, though they aired three days' live coverage of the Hill-Thomas hearings. · · · "60 Minutes" happily broadcast **Jack Kevorkian** killing a man, but a few years ago, when reporting on anti-abortion ads showing aborted fetuses, the network camouflaged the images. ❧ New York Mayor **Rudolph Giuliani** has proposed that a local school district experiment with vouchers. · · · Rep. **Peter Hoekstra** (R-Mich.) traveled the country talking to local educators. "Very seldom, if ever, did we get a statement that said a federal program is really helping us." ❧ "I am the person most qualified to have a [TV] talk show," **Roseanne** told *Harper's Bazaar*. "I have five kids from three different marriages; I come from a trailer park; my sister and brother are both gay; I have multiple personalities; and the *National Enquirer* reunited me with my daughter, who I had given up for adoption." —*SW*

"It's a fax from your wife. She'll be down in a minute."

Benita L. Epstein

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Been There, Done That

January 1997 March 17, 1997

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AAMEN9

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HOW CHEAP INDEED

National Organization for Women president Patricia Ireland described in the Washington Post *in 1993 why Senator Bob Packwood must be expelled from office (reprinted in* ex femina, *October 1998):*

"Even if [Packwood's record on women's issues] were perfect, women should not look the other way. That would only raise questions of 'Can we be bought? And if so, how cheap?'"

CLOSE THE WHITE HOUSE DEPARTMENTS OF PROPAGANDA

The Clinton impeachment proceeding has been described by its critics as an exercise in party or cultural warfare. Actually, it has been an attempt to correct institutional abuses of the White House office. Clinton's reckless behavior, reminiscent of that described in Suetonius's *Lives of the Caesars*, derives from his feeling invulnerable. And he has been.

The core worry about Clinton has been his manipulation of a powerful White House apparatus to prevent execution of the nation's laws and accountability of the executive. The original premise of the Constitution was that public officers were not to be the President's friends. The requirement of Senate confirmation of executive branch officials was imposed, as Hamilton observed in *Federalist* 74, to prevent appointment of persons "who had no other merit than...of being, in some way or another, personally allied to [the President], or of possessing the necessary insignificance and pliancy to render them the obsequious instruments of his pleasure." Public offices, Justice Story observed, were "not for cringing favorites or court sycophants, but...to give dignity, strength, purity, and energy to the administration of the laws."

When the Reorganization Act of 1939 gave the President six personal assistants, it was assumed that they would have "a passion for anonymity.... They would issue no public statements." Let us fast forward from this description to the Clinton staff, which "tells the truth slowly." The White House staff is now not an instrument of public governance but of personal aggrandizement. Activities more appropriate for campaign workers are routinely carried out by government-funded officials.

Not counting any clerical personnel, today's Oval Office staff of ten members is supplemented by a Press Office with 24 members, a Communications Office with eight members, a Speechwriting Office with 13 residents, a Public Liaison Office with 18 staffers, a scheduling and advance team of 25 members, a Correspondence Office with eight employees, and a nine-member Political Affairs Office. In addition, a record 18 publicly paid staffers now work for the First Lady (three times as many as Congress allowed President Roosevelt on the eve of World War II). And the White House Counsel's Office (filled under FDR by the part-time Judge Samuel Rosenman, who doubled as a presidential speechwriter) now has fully 30 members.

Plainly the White House staff has been transformed into a huge propaganda and electioneering machine, paid from taxpayer funds. Of late this apparatus has been employed also for the purpose of defaming witnesses, prosecutors, and critics of the administration, including women telling inconvenient truths, and even uncooperative Democrats like Congressman Paul McHale of Pennsylvania. The blunt fact is that the Clinton White House staff is a corrupt institution employed in a corrupt manner.

Quite apart from its handling of the President, Congress has important work to do in this area. It should make reductions in the size of the White House staff, requiring drastic truncation of the P.R., political, legal, and news-spinning operations. It should require Senate confirmation in the future of such principal White House staff members as the National Security Adviser, the White House Counsel, the Chief of Staff, the Press Secretary, and the principal domestic policy assistant, and oaths of office for the remainder, to remind them whom they work for.

Mr. Clinton, and even some Republicans who aspire to fill his chair, will complain that such proposals undermine the presidency. But effective leadership has not in the past required an in-house propaganda machine of this scope.

The President's poll ratings have no doubt benefited greatly from the daily choreographed media events, usually dealing with issues beyond federal competence, that pre-empt serious political news. But as Judge Learned Hand reminded us, "publicity is an evil substitute" for respected, personal character, "and the arts of publicity are black arts."

Clinton in his wounded state may seem an unlikely Caesar. But what he has established and exploited in the White House is the apparatus of Caesarism. That is the reality the Senate must now confront.

—**George Liebmann** *is a Baltimore lawyer.*

CONFESSIONS OF A NAZI

At first glance, you wouldn't take me for a Nazi. My mother was a Russian Jew. During the pogrom of 1905, she and her family had to hide in the home (at times under the table) of friendly Christians. They were unharmed, but persons they knew were beaten to death by the mob, and soon the family came to America. My father was born in Poland, where he and

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other Jews suffered harsh discrimination. One of his sharpest memories was seeing notices for jobs that ended with the proviso, "Except Jews." He came to America as a teenager. His eldest brother remained in Poland and died in the Holocaust. I became a physician and spent my professional life at a county hospital, where many of our patients were poor and members of minority groups.

One would think this background would be unlikely to produce a Nazi, but apparently one would be mistaken. Recently I was called a Nazi by a colleague who has known me for years, while another colleague did not defend me. For one whose family on both sides suffered for being Jewish, and who lost an uncle to Nazism, being called a Nazi by a non-Jew was an odd experience. How did I live all these years without being detected?

My guilty secret slipped out as we discussed Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr. My colleagues claimed Starr wanted to abolish freedom of speech because he subpoenaed the record of Monica Lewinsky's book purchases. I tried to explain that she stated on the Tripp tapes that she had bought the President gifts, including specific books. So the bookstore records were subpoenaed to corroborate her testimony, not to control reading habits. I added that Starr also subpoenaed the blue dress to reveal perjury, not to control women's wear. At this my associate launched into a tirade against Starr and anyone who did not condemn him, concluding that I was a Nazi and people like me put Hitler into power.

This tirade is not an isolated phenomenon. Supporters of the President outdid his critics in vituperation—not an easy task—during the impeachment debate. Clintonites called proponents of impeachment filthy, mean-spirited, members of a would-be theocracy, sinister, and toxic. One author said proponents of impeachment want to drag the President through town behind a pickup, referring to the recent murder of a black man. A feminist called proponents dirty old white men. A law professor called them mad dogs who were evil, as well as supporters of bigotry, fundamentalism, anti-environmentalism, pro-life ideas (horror!), and the radical Right. Not content with attributing every human evil to those who wanted to hold the President accountable, the professor then compared them to disease-bearing animals, just as the Nazis compared Jews to plague-carrying rats.

Some apologists suggested violence. An actor proposed that we should go to the Capitol and stone Chairman Hyde of the Judiciary Committee to death, then go to his home and kill his wife and children. This is reminiscent of the Nazi doctrine of *Sippenhaft,* which punished the families of those who opposed the Leader. It's not surprising that those who compare their opponents to Nazis should resort to Nazi-like tactics themselves. In psychological terms, they repress their wish to kill their political opponents, then project this forbidden desire onto the opponents. Having imputed to their opponents their own violent wishes, they feel justified in calling the opponents terrible names and threatening retribution.

During the Watergate hearings that led to President Nixon's resignation, the debate was sharp, but I do not recall anyone calling opponents of Nixon evil, comparing them to disease-bearing animals, or urging the murder of their families. If those who now say such things call themselves liberals, they are committing the worst possible slander on liberalism.

—**David Stolinsky** *practices medicine in Los Angeles.*

OSCAR COUP

Don't look now, but a conservative coup is in the works for the Academy Awards. Best Picture frontrunner *Saving Private Ryan* has stolen the thunder from *The Thin Red Line,* its lauded liberal counterpart. And on a lesser scale, *The Truman Show* has outpaced its more left-wing stablemate, *Pleasantville,* by receiving a more impressive set of Oscar nominations. Academy voters usually throw statuettes at the filmmaker with the bloodiest heart, but it looks like this year there'll be a few curve balls in the mix.

Consider the battle between the two WWII epics. Traditionally, any war movie worth its weight in Oscar gold has taken a pacifist stance (from 1930's *All Quiet on the Western Front* to 1986's *Platoon*). In contrast, Steven Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* is a cathartic synthesis of every war film ever made, from the fiercely patriotic to the dishearteningly realistic. As we watch one squad's attempt to rescue an abandoned private, we're ultimately left with the tragic insight that one of mankind's most destructive acts may also be one of the most necessary.

This tug of war within the movie's soul has one scene quarreling with the next (sometimes, as with the opening image of a billowing but faded American flag, the quarrel takes place in a single frame). And so the brutality of the opening Omaha Beach invasion is later juxtaposed with the tormented screams of a little girl whose house has been ripped in half by German bombs. For a broader understanding of *Saving Private Ryan*, go to Spielberg's first Oscar shoo-in, *Schindler's List.* With that film, he showed us why something needed to be done. Here, he shows us what it cost.

The Thin Red Line, writer-director Terrence Malick's return to filmmaking after a 20-year absence, focuses on a far simpler juxtaposition, that of peace—symbolized by nature—and war—symbolized by man. The movie, set on the island of Guadalcanal,

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throbs with images of dangerous beauty, particularly during the scene in which soldiers crouching in the grasses of a cloud-covered field are suddenly exposed by the infiltrating rays of the sun. Too bad these images are accompanied by portentous voiceover narration that sounds like the desperate scribblings of a college freshman who didn't study for his Philosophy 101 exam. "How did we lose the good that was given us?" a soldier's disembodied voice asks. Such muddled musings cast an obfuscating fog over the complexities of war when they could be exploring the heroic/traumatic dichotomy that lies at the heart of conflict itself.

Pleasantville is also mired in the 1960s, but in a far more harmful way. Writer-director Gary Ross's convoluted concept zaps a modern-day sister and brother into a black-and-white 1950s TV show modeled after "Father Knows Best." All the negative stereotypes are here, from the repressed mom with her stiff apron and matching smile to the doofus dad whose briefcase is permanently attached to his arm. With the arrival of the '90s kids comes change, and every time they break a suffocating tradition a splash of color coats an object on the screen.

The problem with *Pleasantville* lies in the two "repressive" traditions that are gleefully smashed: chastity (the sister, a self-described "slut," deflowers the town's basketball star) and marriage (the mom brings color to her face by getting it on with the local soda jerk). And so the sexual revolution is cheered as a virtuous act of liberation, while the civil-rights movement, a far worthier product of the '60s, is reduced to a throwaway joke: After the stodgy black-and-white hard-liners in town square off against their multi-hued neighbors, they plaster signs in their store windows that read, "No coloreds."

Just about any movie would seem conservative in comparison to *Pleasantville*, but director Peter Weir earns extra points with *The Truman Show* for satirically skewering TV. It can be argued that some of the worst Big-Brotherism in society today is that driven by television. TV invades and rules many lives—setting our schedules, shaping tastes, dictating our language, and telling us what information we're allowed to consume. An exaggerated version of this phenomenon takes place in the film, as Jim Carrey's title character, Truman Burbank, slowly discovers that his entire universe, from his wife to the falling rain, is part of an enormously elaborate television program he has unwittingly starred in since birth.

Like the residents of Pleasantville, Truman also goes questing for his individuality; he just doesn't obtain it by jumping into the first available bed. Instead, his struggle is a fairy-tale version of a problem Americans encounter each day: How much do we give in to television's numbing allure? In the movie's audacious climax, Truman doesn't give in, he gets out. Having braved a near-fatal sea storm, he crashes his sailboat into a studio wall that's literally the end of his world. What awaits Truman after his escape, one hopes, is a life of fresh, full-blooded experience, free from the insidious fakery of television.

Perhaps, if the coup is successful, an Oscar will be waiting for his movie too.

—**Josh Larsen** *writes for* Screen *magazine.*

CRACKING THE EDUCATION MONOPOLY

In June 1998, financier Ted Forstmann and Wal-Mart heir John Walton pledged $100 million of their money to launch the Children's Scholarship Fund. In just three months, over 70 million more dollars rolled in. This May the fund will award 35,000 low-income students around the country scholarships that will cover half the cost of tuition to a private school. Forstmann explained this project in a recent speech to the National Press Club, from which the following is adapted.

Why did I make this commitment to equal opportunity in education? Here's the short version, which is the tale of two women.

Bernice Gates is a single mother raising six kids in Washington, D.C. As a recovering alcoholic, she wanted something better for her children. She applied for—and won—scholarships for her children, and also took on extra jobs like working in the kitchen of a private school where two of her children attend, scrubbing pots to help meet the tuition costs. Today she is a full-time graduate student.

Kim Rogers has two daughters in grade school. She was so worried about their safety in D.C. schools that she was about to send them to live with relatives out of town. Then she learned she had cancer. But when she heard she'd won scholarships for her children, the news was "like a medication." Though today her prognosis is good, she says she is now at peace, knowing that no matter what happens, her daughters are safe.

We launched the Children's Scholarship Fund to meet the needs and supplement the sacrifices that millions of parents like Kim Rogers and Bernice Gates make on behalf of their children every day.

I've been very lucky in my life. I've worked hard, but I've also had a lot of good fortune. So when I see kids who, through no fault of their own, have been born to misfortune, it's always

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struck me as unfair. Through the New York Inner-city Scholarship Fund I was first exposed to the successes and failures of inner-city education. I learned that 99 percent of students in parochial schools graduate—compared to 50 percent in nearby public schools. I learned that nearly 90 percent of students in inner-city parochial schools go on to private higher education, compared to roughly 40 percent from public schools—despite the fact that 65 percent of parochial students are at or below the poverty level, nearly 90 percent are minority students, and 60 percent come from single-parent households.

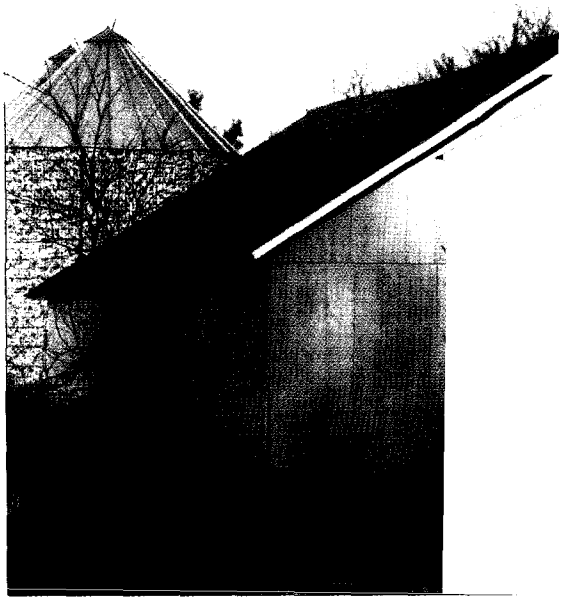
The money spent per child in New York City public schools exceeds $8,000 annually, whereas the annual per-student spending in inner-city parochial schools is around $3,500. In the marketplace, an enterprise that offered such a clearly inferior product at such a substantially higher cost would quickly be out of business.

I wondered if this were just some isolated New York phenomenon, but I found similar statistics elsewhere. Then I wondered, Could the "customer" not care? Some people do suggest many inner-city parents don't care and have too many problems to take an active role in their child's education.

But when, with very little publicity, John and I offered 1,000 scholarships to low-income Washington, D.C. parents in 1997, we received over 7,500 applications within three months from those parents who supposedly didn't care. These were low-income parents, with children already receiving free public education, who had to somehow come up with an average of $1,000 in order to take advantage of the partial scholarships we were offering.

I support public education, and the Children's Scholarship Fund supports public education. But a monopolistic model isn't the best way to provide public education—and tinkering around the edges of that monopoly isn't a good way to reform public education. Competition will be good for schools, good for children and their families—and good for teachers, especially good teachers, whose commitment and hard work frequently go unnoticed by a system that too often fails to reward excellence. I believe that the children of all the Kim Rogers and Bernice Gates of America deserve an equal opportunity to get a decent education. I believe the parents we assist are competent to make good choices for their children. All of us at the Children's Scholarship Fund place our faith in freedom—and in the ability of ordinary, often humble people to make the best decisions, by their own lights, for themselves and their families.

The Children's Scholarship Fund can be reached at (212) 752-8555.



FREE TRADE, PLEASE

When a farm magazine asked farmers to rank their sources of stress, machinery breakdowns ranked higher than family discord. This did not surprise me. My wife works hard every day—so hard I can't keep up with her—yet after 20-plus years on the premises she is still in top-notch condition. On the other hand, we have two grain harvesting combines, late-model John Deeres, and it is a rare day indeed that this quarter-million-dollar investment performs without repair. In our latest harvest we replaced two large tires at $1,300 a pop, had a radiator with a burst aneurysm, watched a drive belt shred itself against the side of the combine, and had a machine burst

TONIGHT'S TELEVISION LISTINGS

	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30
FOX	Real Humans in Real Pain	Feral Dingos Eating Children	Jiggle Beach	L.A. Chicks	Beverly Hills 90210: The 90,210th Episode	
WB	Where My Wife At?	Gittin' Yo Freak On	Me & My Psychic	Kids Swallow the Darndest Things	Dawsons' Clothes	
ANIMAL PLANET	Incontinent Rhinos	Dan Taylor: Mongoose Podiatrist	The Joy of Squirrels	Sit! Stay!	The Best of Sit! Stay!	
E!	Andy Gibb: A Nightmare Descent into Booze & Pills		Margot Kidder: A Nightmare Descent into Booze & Pills		Boy George: A Nightmare Descent into Booze & Pills	
ESPN2	Finland's Brutalest Men	Being Hit by a Trolley Regional Semifinals	60 Minutes of Joe Theismann's Leg Breaking		Co-ed Sweaty Lycra Weight-training from Maui	
LIFETIME	How Can I Choose Between My Daughters?		Wives Who Didn't Mean to Kill Their Husbands		The Boy Whose Mommy Watched Too Much TV	
TNN	Well, I'll Be Dipped		You Hush Up, Wanda Mae	Little Rhinestoned Cabin in the Woods	Hold It Down While I Get My Rifle from the Truck	
TELEMUNDO	Roberto Amorosa en Agua Caliente!		Whoomp! Dónde Está?	Goooooooooal!	Ai! Ai! Ai! Ai! Ai!	La Hora De Goya
CINEMAX	Bare Ambition (Tanya Roberts)	Naked Exposition (Tracy Lords)	Body of Nudity (Dana Plato)		Unclothed Anguish (Joyce DeWitt)	
PUBLIC ACCESS	Blurry Steve	Inaudible City Council Meeting	Do We Have A Caller on the Line? Hello?	The Best of Lunch Menus	My Friend Made This Short Film	Men with Braids Speak Out

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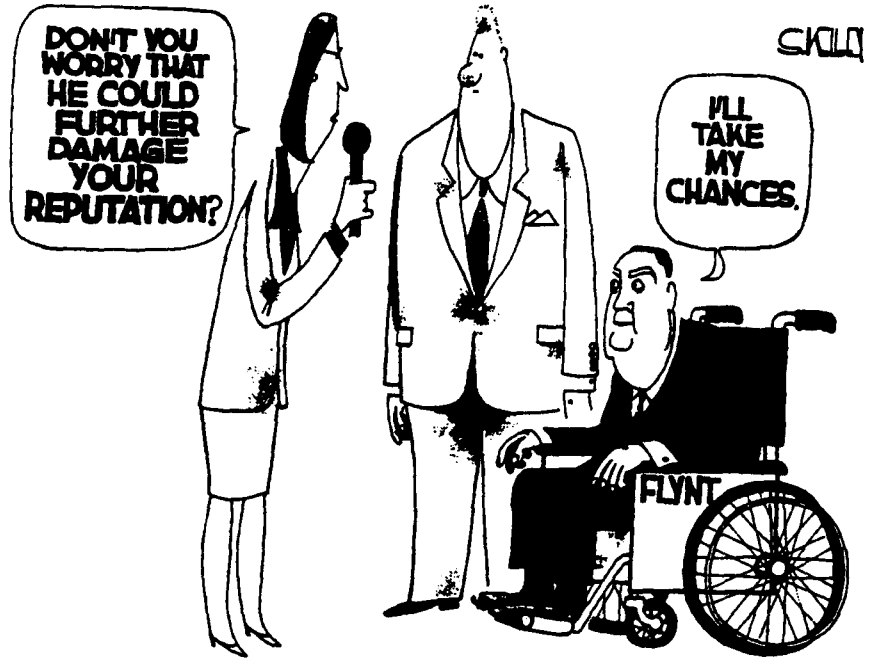
into flames while I was driving. The fire resulted in a two-day breakdown, a $2,000 bill, and replacement of a 45-pound wiring jacket with over 100 connections. We began snaking the new wiring jacket through the rig's various narrow cavities (all packed with soybean dust) at about 9 A.M. on a Sunday morning, kept threading until 6 P.M., and finally returned to harvesting at dark. The combine ran for an hour, and then a hydraulic hose damaged in the fire failed, spewing oil all over. The prospective repairman—me—went home.

The other item ranking high as a cause of farm stress recently has been low farm prices. This fall, prices for the things we grow reached 12-year lows. Unfortunately, that bottoming of commodity prices occurred in a year divisible by two; so the politicians started throwing us money in order to buy our votes. Farmers don't come cheap. After a presidential veto of the original Republican appropriation, the solons compromised at about $6 billion in emergency farm aid—roughly $30,000 for every full-time farmer in the country. This only two years after passage of the 1996 Freedom to Farm Act theoretically ended involvement by Uncle Sam in farming forever. Forever is a short time in Washington.

Which is not to say that farm problems are a figment of Democratic campaign consultants' fervid imaginations. A combination of localized weather disasters and low prices have indeed taken the bloom off our newfound freedom to farm. Large areas in the Dakotas have suffered several years of weather-related yield losses, and much of the South dried up and blew away last summer. And the print on the disaster bill had barely dried before inflation-adjusted prices of hogs dropped to the lowest levels in history.

Despite those local problems, we farmers raised a near-record U.S. corn crop, a large wheat crop, and a record soybean crop. The problem is, these plentiful supplies were coupled with a precipitous decline in export demand, particularly from Asia, and low livestock prices. The combination dropped net farm income by about 35 to 40 percent. Farm income is now the lowest percentage of farm debt since 1986, and one economist at the University of Nebraska estimates that 1998 was the worst year for farmers since 1981.



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But $6 billion in aid does not come close to addressing the real problems farmers face. Only freer trade can do that. The Republican majority forced a vote on trade-friendly "fast track" legislation as last year's congressional session ended, but Bill Clinton, held hostage by the far Left and labor elements of his party, failed to help. Consequently, fast track lost by a bigger margin than it did a year ago. In addition, Republicans caved in and increased IMF funding without getting the reforms needed to open Asian economies.

The Freedom to Farm reforms brought a huge and mostly productive change in the relationship between farmers and Washington. But without better access to foreign markets, farmers are in an untenable position. It is no coincidence that the drop in farm exports this year is only slightly larger than the emergency aid voted by Congress.

Politicians did in 1998 what politicians always do, papering over a long-term problem—this time of market xaccess—by using unsustainable handouts to make a short-term price dip disappear. Things could have gone worse, though. While Republicans caved in to pressure for aid, at least they resisted Democratic demands for reviving long-term supports, which would have guaranteed huge food surpluses and low prices for the foreseeable future.

We finished harvest and limped home with one truck parked with its wheels literally falling off, one auger with two bearings out (our motto: Run it till it smokes), and the irritability that comes from two months of not enough sleep. We are confident that we can overcome whatever those idiot engineers at John Deere throw at us. We have considerably less confidence, though, that the hard work and persistence needed to convince our trading partners to open their markets will be forthcoming from the President and Congress.

So no matter how much stress the fires and failing bearings produce, I lose more sleep knowing that even though my fellow American farmers and I are the best in the world, we won't succeed without a chance to sell the world what we produce.

—TAE *Contributing Writer*
Blake Hurst farms in Missouri.

THE VERDICT IS IN

From a recent Joseph Sobran column:

"When a man is defended by James Carville, Geraldo Rivera, Alan Dershowitz, and Larry Flynt, it seems almost superfluous to convict him. The very fact that he attracts partisans of this caliber is itself a kind of verdict."

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A GOOD DEEDS ALLIANCE

Stephen Goldsmith, Republican mayor of Indianapolis, noted in a recent speech in Washington, D.C., that to solve difficult social problems like fatherlessness and people who are unwilling to work, government and churches must join forces.

Goldsmith explained how in his city, maintenance contracts for small urban parks were given to nearby churches. Today, ten Indianapolis churches tend 29 parks. This saves the city money, gives churches a place to offer productive jobs, and improves neighborhoods, since locals take better care of their nearby parks than city workers did.

Indianapolis has also formed a "Front-porch Alliance" between pastors and city officials. The Alliance can award small grants and assist in cutting red tape. One church, for example, was granted $5,000 to build a drug treatment center. A second church convinced the city to transfer title to a long-abandoned crack house. A Catholic church used the Alliance's aid to win permission to use a nearby public school's gym for an hour a day.

The Alliance also connects suburban churches with worthy urban churches who need volunteers. "It's very easy for middle- and upper-class folks to totally ignore blacks and the poor," Goldsmith said. "We've helped a fair number of suburban churches find urban churches to work with."

Goldsmith is also a firm believer in private schools. He supports the efforts of city business leaders (led by Patrick Rooney, CEO of Golden Rule Insurance) to supply thousands of scholarships that pay half the tuition of poor students who want to attend private schools. Although he is a Jew, Goldsmith is a strong supporter of Catholic education. "I bet I'm the only mayor with the name of Goldsmith leading an archdiocese's fund-raising drive," he said.

Government, Goldsmith concluded, "should stop pretending to be the dominant supplier of good deeds."

RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION SLOWLY ENDING

Faith-based groups are still trying to understand the new "charitable choice" provisions of the 1996 welfare reform bill. To help them, the American Enterprise Institute and the Center for Public Justice held a conference on January 14, on what faith-based groups may and may not do under the new welfare rules.

Stephen Monsma, a government professor at Pepperdine University, observed that the Supreme Court has adopted two rules about government aid to religious groups. The old rule, used by the Court in the 1960s and '70s, stated that there should be no government aid to religion or to "persuasively sectarian" groups. This rule came about as a result of parochial schools trying, and failing, to obtain government funds to pay for their secular classes (such as math).

Under these sometimes contradictory rules, Monsma observed, the Court declared that governments could not directly support religious elementary and secondary schools, but the government may fund Catholic and Protestant colleges, because in the Court's eyes most of them are not religious. Actually, the 90 members of the Association of Christian Colleges, for example, have all sorts of religious aspects, including requirements that faculty members be Bible-believing Christians. Yet these schools receive work-study and other government aid, Monsma noted.

Stanley Carson-Thies of the Center for Public Justice then explained that the charitable choice law which Congress passed as part of welfare reform specifically requires government to be neutral toward religion. Its rules stipulate that states disbursing federal welfare money to charities may not discriminate between faith-based groups and secular ones, and bureaucrats can't require faith-based groups to hide religious elements in order to receive tax dollars. On the other hand, faith-based groups who receive tax dollars can't require welfare recipients to attend religious services. Nor can they use tax dollars to subsidize general church operations.

What they can do is put the old government welfare programs to shame with their effectiveness. Religious groups have long helped the poor achieve independence and upward-mobility at far higher rates and with far lower budgets than government programs.

In the three years since charitable choice became law, Carson-Thies reported, very little new government money has actually gone to religious groups, in part because charitable choice only applies to federal funds spent on welfare and community development. Lots of other federal poverty-fighting programs, including job-training and drug treatment programs, fall under the old, anti-religious rules. Senator John Ashcroft (R-Mo.), has introduced a bill that would

QUOTATION OF THE MONTH

"Being racially neutral is racially discriminatory."

—professor Philip Daniel, University of Minnesota, speaking to the Education Law Association (courtesy of Mike Antonucci)

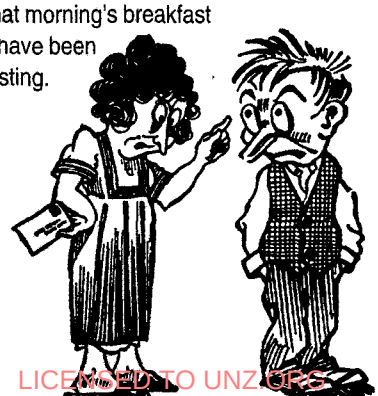
MARRIAGE OF EQUALS

Two consecutive letters to the editor in the January 26, 1999 edition of Michigan's *Grand Rapids Press* caught the eye of TAE contributor Ed Ericson.

The first is a 285-word epistle arguing in great detail that "the incidents involving the President and Monica were private, sexually oriented, and...not crimes." It is signed Joseph A. Renihan.

The letter immediately following, headlined "My husband wrong about Clinton," is a three-line model of brevity: "I totally disagree with my husband. Even though he went to law school and was once a prosecutor." Its author: Ruth M. Renihan.

That morning's breakfast must have been interesting.



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extend charitable choice provisions to all federal anti-poverty programs.

States have had a mixed record in including faith-based groups, Carson-Thies said. In Michigan, Governor John Engler has been enthusiastic in promoting charitable choice, while the state welfare agency has cast a colder eye on the reform. Sometimes cities have done more than states; Indianapolis and San Diego have reached out to faith-based groups, even as Indiana and California state welfare officials remain staunchly secular.

Differences also occur within state governments. The Texas Department of Human Services, which administers federal welfare grants, has been enthusiastic about charitable choice and even publishes a newsletter giving practical advice to churches. But the Texas Workforce Commission, which administers federal job-training grants, has been much slower to connect with religious groups.

Once faith-based charities—a bulwark against misery in times past—figure out how to fund their programs under charitable choice, they could dramatically change "the way welfare is done in this country," Carson-Thies said.

THE ERA OF BIG GOVERNMENT LIVES ON

That giant sucking sound Americans heard when President Clinton delivered his most recent State of the Union address was their federal tax dollars, tens of billions of them, flowing right through Washington in a racing blur. If you've got a problem—an earache, a dragging muffler on your car, low self-esteem, not enough time to pick up your kids and get them to the next soccer match—Bill Clinton undoubtedly has a government program just for you.

For the first five minutes of his speech the President paid homage to fiscal responsibility and a budget surplus he did nothing to create. If only he had stopped there. If only he had declared the state of the Union healthy and prosperous and then let us return to our regularly scheduled programming. But it was not to be. For the next hour he unveiled a vision of a European welfare state transplanted to North America.

Throughout the President's fire-sale chat I pounded away on my hand calculator, furiously trying to keep a running tally of the price tag for his new nanny-state initiatives. Alas, I couldn't keep up. But here is my best-faith effort to answer the question no journalist bothered to ask: Just how much is all this going to cost? The answer—close to $150 billion over the next five years, according to my preliminary estimates, including:

- $25 billion for expanding Medicare to non-seniors
- $10 billion for Medicare drug benefits
- $8 billion for higher veterans benefits
- $15 billion for higher military pay
- $5.5 billion for federal land buying
- $1.5 billion for new carpool lanes, bike paths, and transit
- $4 billion for parks
- $10 billion for new farm programs
- $1.5 billion for homelessness
- $20 billion for new school construction and other education subsidies
- $3.5 billion for the Export-Import Bank and other corporate welfare
- $7.5 billion for child care and after-school programs
- $1 billion for drug testing
- $2.5 billion for business subsidies
- $1 billion for Americorps expansion
- $2 billion for global warming research

So much for saving Social Security first!

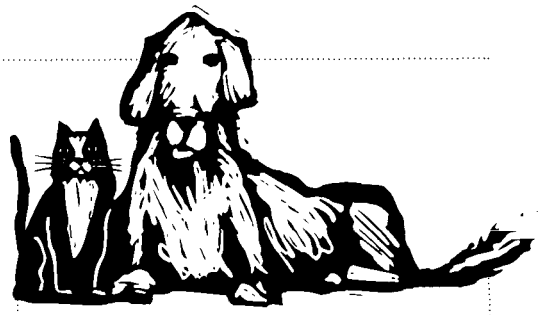
—**Stephen Moore** *is director of fiscal policy studies at the Cato Institute.*

CHILDREN LOVE HIM

The morning after President Clinton's recent State of the Union address, constitutional scholar Roger Pilon sent out this message:

I'm distressed by the absence in the President's message last night of any concern about my pressing need for help from our government with pet care. I longed to hear him say:

> My fellow Americans, for too long in this nation we have ignored the medical needs of those family members who cannot speak for themselves, who do not even have the vote—our pets. Have you taken your pet to the vet lately? The cost of pet care has skyrocketed in recent years, yet we have done nothing as a people to help the millions of Americans who have to face the cruel choice between food for their children and vets for their pets. I know personally how important the family pet can be. Our own Socks and Buddy, never judgmental, have helped to bring Hillary and me closer together in troubled times, yet they too get into scrapes from time to time, which means expensive trips to the vet. If we are serious in this nation about helping struggling families, we can hardly ignore these cherished family members. Tonight, therefore, I am proposing a bill that will ensure that every American—black, white, or furry—has adequate medical care. As we move into the twenty-first century, let us end this discrimination and dedicate ourselves to the humanitarian goals enshrined in my Vets for Pets Act.



Bill Clinton's vision of government is as Santa Claus. The beauty of Santa Claus is that he looks only to ends, and never concerns himself with means. Clinton likewise talks only about benefits, never about costs. Children love him.

FOLLOW-UP: IS AMERICA TURNING A CORNER?

Following up on last issue's cover story about improving social indicators, we find more evidence of a retreat from 1960s foolishness in the latest installment of a massive annual survey of U.S. college freshmen.

The just-released figures show only 40 percent of freshmen believe that "if two people really like each other, it's all right for them to have sex, even if they've known each other for a very short time." That's a record low since the question began being asked three decades ago, down 12 percentage points from the mid-1980s.

In addition, barely 51 percent of freshmen now say they believe abortion should be legal, a decline of 14 percentage points since the early 1990s.

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FOLLOW-UP II: IS AMERICA TURNING A CORNER?

One reform achieved by the post-'94 Republican Congress is a re-channeling of some of the federal money spent on sex education and contraceptives into abstinence-based teaching for school children. To say that the sex-ed establishment has fought this kicking and screaming would gravely understate the magnitude of their hissy fit.

But the changes are starting to take hold. Recently, the pro-abstinence education group Project Reality sponsored a Chicago rally that attracted 9,000 teenagers. It was funded not only by a federal grant funneled through the Illinois Department of Human Services but also by corporate sponsors like the Glenview State Bank, Hollister, Inc., the Loyola Medical Center, the United Center, Mars Candy Co., and Walgreens.

At the close of the rally, Chicago Public Schools CEO Paul Vallas gave an interview to the *Chicago Tribune* in which he "revealed that a new family health curriculum will be introduced systemwide in January to teach abstinence as the number-one choice—not one of several equally legitimate options."

"Our health care curriculum" Vallas insisted, "has to be oriented toward preaching that abstinence is the first best way." Just a few years ago, such a statement from the head of a major public school system would have been unimaginable.

HANGING NIXON

In a room in the Capitol where House GOP leaders discussed how to proceed with impeachment charges against Bill Clinton is an artifact that arrived earlier this year wrapped in a plain brown wrapper so as to offend as few people as possible.

No, it isn't a missing appendix to the Starr Report. It's a portrait of Richard Nixon. That it's now on display in a conference room just steps away from the office of newly elected Speaker Dennis Hastert tells a story about two generations: The baby boomers who championed impeachment more than two decades ago, and today's twentysomethings who have grown increasingly cynical about our current chief executive.

Republican leaders have Duke law school, where Nixon was class of '37, to thank for the new decoration. The Duke faculty and administration have never celebrated the school's most famous graduate (nor their other alum, Kenneth Starr)—which is why they're uncomfortable with the efforts of Duke law student Kimberly Lerman to memorialize Nixon on campus.

Lerman has taken a special interest in the portrait, which was commissioned in 1969 by the alumni association to honor the new President. They hired renowned artist Joseph Wallace King, whose subjects included Queen Elizabeth II and the Saudi royal family. The President was at first reluctant but finally agreed because of his affection for the years he spent at Duke.

The Nixons were pleased with King's work, but even then, years before Watergate, Nixon seemed aware of how he might be received on campus. The First Lady turned to King and said, "I do hope we can get to Duke and see the painting when it is hung." King remembers her husband's response. "Going out the door I heard him say in a low voice, 'That will be a long time.'"

How prescient. And what a long, strange trip it's been. After Watergate, some students hijacked the painting from the law school's moot courtroom and hid it in an elevator shaft. Administrators eventually recovered it, and for some 23 years it migrated between a campus broom closet and what has been described as a hermetically sealed room off the Dean's office that houses transcripts and other valuables.

Now along comes Lerman, who wasn't born until the Ford administration. "I thought it was disrespectful to have the portrait sitting in a closet," she says. So Lerman campaigned to have it displayed in the library by circulating a letter to her fellow students that generated so much support that the administration and faculty, most of them '60s kids, were again forced to grapple with the question of what to do with the picture.

Their solution: They displayed it on campus for 30 days, and then shipped it to the GOP Congress. Lerman was not happy. "There's nothing indicating we ever graduated someone who went on to become President," she told TAE's John Meroney. She says she may now push for a display of Nixon's admission application and handwritten acceptance letter in the library foyer.

But long-time professors like William Van Alstine will have none of it: "It's just a bit unseemly for a place that is allegedly training ethical lawyers to feature among those it honors the one President who resigned in disgrace for possible criminality," he told us.

How far we've come. Students campaigning, against professorial resistance, to honor Nixon. Meanwhile, over at Bill Clinton's alma mater Georgetown, student newspapers have been calling for the resignation of their alumnus.

"Troublemakers," as Nixon once said of the younger generation.

ENTERTAINMENT TODAY

"I can't take it anymore. I have wasted my life. To hell with this stupid show business, this ridiculous show business, this futile wasteful life. I look back and see a desert wasteland.

After 35 years I look back and cringe with embarrassment and say to myself, 'How could you have done that?' I've done one or two good films and some bad films. It was a complete waste of time."

—Sir Anthony Hopkins announcing he is giving up acting, December 20, 1998, as quoted by the Parents' Television Council

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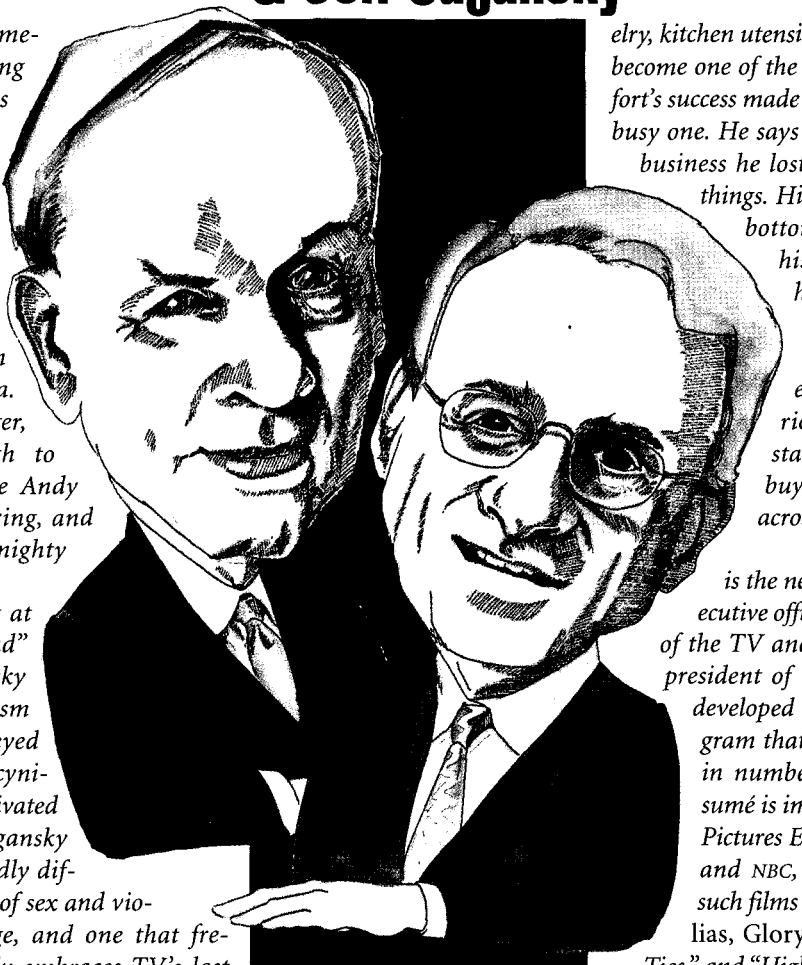
"Live" with TAE

TWO HIGH-FLYING PRODUCERS OF HIT TV PROGRAMMING HAVE LAUNCHED A NEW BROADCAST NETWORK THAT PROMISES SOMETHING NOVEL: FAMILY-FRIENDLY PROGRAMMING 100 PERCENT OF THE TIME.

"Bud" Paxson & Jeff Sagansky



We're trying to bring peace of mind to people's homes, so that their values aren't assaulted when they turn on their television.

Is it possible to launch a media empire by broadcasting reruns of one TV series night after night? Just ask a man named Ted Turner, who, in the '70s, ran black-and-white episodes of a program about a small-town sheriff and his red-headed son almost continuously on Channel 17 in Atlanta. More than two decades later, Turner did well enough to marry Jane Fonda, "The Andy Griffith Show" is still airing, and Channel 17 became the mighty TBS *Superstation.*

Some are now looking at the efforts of Lowell "Bud" Paxson and Jeff Sagansky with the same skepticism with which they once eyed Turner. But much of the cynicism now seems to be motivated by what Paxson and Sagansky aspire to create: A decidedly different TV experience, free of sex and violence and crude language, and one that frequently and unashamedly embraces TV's last taboo: God.

Pax TV—the country's seventh over-the-air network—went on the air late last summer with nightly reruns of "Touched by an Angel" as its mainstay, and as the prototype for its own original programming. The lineup also includes reruns of family-friendly shows such as "Life Goes On," "Eight is Enough," and "Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman." The launch defied those who predicted it would never happen, and neither Paxson nor Sagansky should be counted out.

Before Pax TV, the 64-year-old Paxson was best known as the founder of the Home Shopping Network. Who would have thought hawking jewelry, kitchen utensils, and clothing on cable would become one of the sensations of the '80s? The effort's success made Paxson a rich man, and a very busy one. He says he became so consumed with business he lost sight of the most important things. His wife left him and he hit rock bottom. But then one day in 1986 his life turned around: Paxson had a religious conversion and became a born-again Christian. In 1990, he sold his interest in HSN *(making him even richer) and set his sights on starting what is now Pax TV by buying up some 80* UHF *stations across the country.*

Leading the charge with him is the network's president and chief executive officer, Jeff Sagansky, 46, a veteran of the TV and film business. When he was president of CBS *Entertainment, Sagansky developed "Touched by an Angel," a program that often outscores "60 Minutes" in numbers of viewers. Sagansky's résumé is impressive: When he was at Sony Pictures Entertainment, TriStar Pictures, and* NBC*, he was involved in bringing such films and programs as* Steel Magnolias, Glory, *"The Cosby Show," "Family Ties," and "Highway to Heaven" to audiences.*

Paxson and Sagansky are determined to eventually reach more than 80 percent of American households and to carve out an entertainment niche quite different from much of Hollywood. And their programming isn't the only thing that sets them apart. By establishing the Pax TV headquarters in South Florida, they've effectively told the entertainment capitals of Los Angeles and New York that it can *be done elsewhere.*

So what do these two TV pros—businessman and creative type, Christian and Jew—have in mind? That's what Los Angeles journalist Dave Geisler asked them on TAE*'s behalf.*

Illustration by Lucinda S. Levine

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TAE: PAX TV is trying to position itself as the family network, broadcasting shows that don't have sex and violence. But one of the three big networks, CBS, has been trying to corner that market in the last few years. Their slogan is "Welcome Home." Will the real family network please stand up?

PAXSON: Would you want to welcome CBS's Howard Stern into your home? We make a promise to our viewers that PAX TV will deliver no programming with excessive violence, explicit sex, or foul language. We make that promise 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and we'll make it forever. I don't think that's the same for CBS, and I think that's the difference. We're family, and they're not.

SAGANSKY: But we do buy a lot of good CBS programming, such as "Touched by an Angel" and "Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman." What we're really trying to do is get women, ages 25 to 54, and their children, as our viewers. There are many more women watching TV than men. So we want to create an environment where parents can feel that, if their children are watching, it's O.K., and they're not going to be assaulted by images of sex, violence, or language.

TAE: Do you create programming based on audience research?

PAXSON: Well, the whole concept is a network based on family programming. So we're responding to research surveys that say 85 percent of all Americans have a spiritual life and believe there's too much sex and violence on TV. We see that as an opportunity. Counter-programming has always been good television business. If everybody is over there with Howard Stern and Jerry Springer, we're going to come over here and do family stuff.

TAE: With baby boomers now moving into their fifties, how will you attract them and older viewers?

SAGANSKY: I don't think we have a policy of saying, "Gee, let's go after older viewers" as such, but everybody's welcome. If the shows appeal to them, fabulous.

PAXSON: The average age in America is 41. In 15 years, it will grow to be 50. The average boomer is 48, and he's influencing America. He's changing the country's morals and its habits. But we're shooting for a woman who is 25 to 50. There's a great portion of the population that's going to fit into that arena. The ratings to date tell us that we're reaching women—they're about 60 percent of our audience—and there's a good chance they hold the remote control in the family. I think the average mom is more apt to be concerned with what her children are watching than the husband, and our network is aimed toward her.

We make a promise that Pax TV will deliver no programming with excessive violence, explicit sex, or foul language—24 hours a day, seven days a week, forever. That's the difference.

SAGANSKY: But really we want to get everyone in the tent, and I don't think that family viewing necessarily has an age skew to it. We bought a show from Warner Brothers called "Seventh Heaven" which has a very, very young skew. On the other hand, we also have "Diagnosis: Murder," which has an older appeal. So we're not targeting specifically a certain age or even sex. What we are targeting is a certain kind of programming taste—family, faith, and community.

TAE: Let me ask you about children's programming. Will you communicate spiritual values through it?

PAXSON: We air three hours of children's programming every Saturday and Sunday morning—it's part cartoon, part re-enactment, part drama. And it's produced to comply with the educational standards set forth by the Federal Communications Commission. It's also looked over by about half-a-dozen college professors with degrees in child psychology.

TAE: But what about the content?

SAGANSKY: Well, it's not like watching Nickelodeon or the Cartoon Network. I think the best children's programming is the kind an adult can also watch and enjoy, where there will be values embedded in the program from which one can learn and talk about afterwards. "Little Men" has fantastic stories that will appeal to kids of all ages, but at the same time there's a great romance in the center of it, with adult stories as well. A lot of people watch "Touched by an Angel" with their kids. It used to be that all network programming was like that.

TAE: Speaking of "Touched by an Angel," the episodes you're airing are ones which have already been broadcast by CBS. Why are you paying $1 million an episode for reruns, and making it the flagship show of PAX TV?

SAGANSKY: Because it has all the values that we're looking for in other programming. It's what we wanted the network to be.

TAE: What exactly are those values?

SAGANSKY: Inspiration. Hope. Faith.

PAXSON: It's got a lot of hard issues in it too. There have been episodes on unwed mothers, husbands trying to bring up the children when the wife has left the house, homosexuality, mothers who are on drugs—it's treated all of

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those subjects, but in a very dignified way, in a manner that portrays real life.

TAE: You were quoted as saying that "Touched by an Angel" does more for the Kingdom of God than all the TV evangelists combined.

PAXSON: Yes, and that's because so many millions of Americans see Roma Downey or Della Reese look into the camera every week and say, "There is a God. He loves you. He wants a relationship with you." It's a wonderful message. If you add up the ratings, you'll see that more people are going to hear that message in one week than will hear all the televangelists in America. And nobody is asking for money, or saying, To stay on the air, you've got to send a check.

TAE: Jeff Sagansky was part of the CBS series "Christy," which was beloved by many religious Americans. It received high ratings everywhere except urban markets, but CBS cancelled it, even after a letter-writing campaign to keep it on. Why didn't it make it?

SAGANSKY: They cancelled it because I left.

PAXSON: But now we air it every Sunday night, and it's doing extremely well, including in the urban areas. Jeff created it, and it was actually named for his wife. I'm hopeful we're going to be able to get the contractual rights to start producing it again, since there aren't many episodes.

SAGANSKY: I green-lighted both "Touched by an Angel" and "Christy," and they were getting similar ratings. But they kept one on and not the other.

TAE: "Touched by an Angel" was in danger of being cancelled for a while?

SAGANSKY: Yes, and they should have kept both of them on. Peter Tortorici, who was my successor at CBS, has acknowledged to me several times that one of the biggest mistakes he made was not keeping "Christy."

TAE: Some in the TV business say that the success of "Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman" helped make "Christy" possible and that it, in turn, brought about "Touched by an Angel." Is that true?

SAGANSKY: I don't really believe that, because I was there. I developed all three of those shows. Once we had the audience base, and saw that it was working, I kept developing things that were in that vein.

PAXSON: "Touched by an Angel" is one of the top-five rated shows in television every week. And the reason is because it's got compelling drama about real-life issues. "Dr. Quinn" is a period piece that has family values too. Those are

We're responding to research that shows 85 percent of all Americans have a spiritual life and believe there's too much sex and violence on TV. We see that as an opportunity.

the kinds of programs we would like to see.

TAE: The major networks seem to have discovered single-parent families. Will PAX TV programming promote the traditional nuclear family, or try to reflect current societal trends?

SAGANSKY: I think we have to reflect society's trends. I don't think we can go off in a world and reflect a society that doesn't exist anymore. On the other hand, there are many, many two-parent households; so I would say that we'll probably do both.

PAXSON: I think the kind of programming we have reflects all kinds of families. You're going to see single families in the line-up, and you're going to see the husband and wife and children in the lineup.

TAE: You're also producing a program about people who've experienced miracles.

PAXSON: Yes, "It's a Miracle." The show recreates events in people's lives that suggest divine intervention. The first few weeks we were living off material from people who had written books about miracles; so at the end of the show we asked viewers to contact us with stories. We've been inundated. It's amazing how many times people have gone through some experience which you and I would only call a miracle.

SAGANSKY: It's about the unexplained good things that happen to people when they have faith.

PAXSON: If I have an ideal, it would be the "Hallmark Hall of Fame" movie series. It's always had a little touch of spirituality, great family drama, and warmth. That's the kind of television that we and many Americans are looking for.

TAE: Some people think ABC is a family-oriented network. It has a Friday night lineup called "TGIF," as well as programs such as "Home Improvement." Would you consider running some of the ABC programs?

PAXSON: There is some other network programming that we're very excited about being able to run in the future. One of them is "Promised Land," which we'll get in another year. "7th Heaven" from Warner Brothers, comes to us in 2002. But we have nothing at this time which we've seen from ABC that would interest us.

SAGANSKY: Look, every network has a couple of positive shows, but there's no network that has them on a full-time basis. And when most of these other networks put on a family show and it works, they think it's a fluke.

TAE: Why?

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SAGANSKY: Because they don't believe in softer programming. They believe that the way to get the viewer is with either sexual themes or a lot of action and violence. Look at any promo.

PAXSON: I've never been in a bar when an Uzi submachine gun goes off. I've never seen police cars flying through the air and hitting something else head-on. That doesn't occur in my life. What does occur are the great trials that my parents had bringing me up, watching them get older and passing away, bringing my own children up, relationships, marital work, health and financial issues. These are the great dramas of life, and you can capture those dramas and put them into compelling TV shows. You're going to get good ratings simply because this is the kind of thing we call "life."

TAE: Why do you think there's such a chasm between the values of TV producers and average Americans?

PAXSON: Well, Jeff headed NBC and CBS, and he started TriStar and ran Columbia TriStar, and he says writers used to submit shows to him all the time that reflected what they thought the network wanted, even while in their hearts they had a great desire to do family drama but didn't know there was an outlet. Now they're coming to him and saying, "I've got this great show I wrote years ago and you've got to take a look at it. It's going to be great for your network."

SAGANSKY: The reason is that when you're in Hollywood you get credit from your peers, who are about the same age, for doing programs that have an edge and an attitude. That's how you earn your wings. But I'll tell you, every time I put on a "Christy" or "Touched by an Angel," people in Hollywood, as well as the critics, said they would be the first shows cancelled that year.

TAE: Just because of the subject matter?

SAGANSKY: Because the shows are soft and sentimental. They had emotion to them. And I think at times that makes people really uncomfortable. They think this kind of sentimental, emotional programming doesn't have enough attitude—it's not hip, edgy, and therefore there's no audience for it. Well, there may not be an audience for it among executives, but there's a *huge* audience for it in the country.

PAXSON: The great writers we know have a propensity and capability for writing family-type television, except that's not what the network buyers wanted to buy; so they wrote what the buyers wanted, and now people are blaming them for American TV. The writers are not necessarily at fault.

People in Hollywood think this kind of sentimental, emotional programming doesn't have enough attitude—it's not hip, edgy, and therefore there's no audience for it. There may not be an audience for it among executives, but there's a *huge* audience for it in the country.

TAE: The *Los Angeles Times* quoted Jeff Sagansky as saying that as a network programmer, one of the things he constantly heard was, "Don't do shows about politics or religion." Who said that?

SAGANSKY: That was everybody. That was the dogma. That's Programming 101. You learn that when you become a programmer.

PAXSON: There was a time in American history when our mothers told us, When you go to a cocktail party, don't talk about politics, sex, and religion. Then in the late 1960s, we started talking about politics—now we're nauseated from it. By the late 1970s, we were talking about everything we could in terms of sex. So America has Jerry Springer. Now we can finally talk about God for the first time.

SAGANSKY: The conventional wisdom is wrong. For the last 50 years, whenever the public has been polled about what's most important in life, family and religion are numbers one and two. In Hollywood, it's not that they don't have those values in their own lives. They just don't think that's what the audience cares about or wants to see.

TAE: Does Hollywood have any kind of agenda?

SAGANSKY: Making money and getting ratings. Unfortunately, they feel that it's easier to do that with many tasteless programs, and I think they're wrong. If we've learned anything over the last 20 years, it's that these good programs may not start off strong, but when given time, they all find an audience. It's like the tortoise and the hare. The family shows are the tortoises—they'll start slow but will last much longer than all of the stuff that is violent and sexual in nature. It grabs viewers but peters out real quick, too. It's not about anything. There are no underlying values to the programming.

TAE: What is the PAX TV policy toward advertisers?

PAXSON: No liquor, no beer, no tobacco, no psychics.

TAE: *Threading the Needle* is the Bud Paxson autobiography, but it ends just as PAX TV is being launched. What's the significance of the title?

PAXSON: It comes from the Book of Luke in the Bible, where Jesus says that it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than it is for a rich man to get into heaven. When I left the Home Shopping Network and sold all the stock that I owned in 1991, I was very well off. Everyone told me I should retire; so I did. I went to

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the beach and it was a great day. But the next day I got up and my body said, Are we going back to the beach? My mind said, Heck, no, there's nothing for me there, I've got to work. So we decided to create Paxson Communications. The task I have is to make it into heaven, and I can only do that through the grace of God. So that title is about the struggle to gain the Kingdom of God in this secular world.

TAE: So why was the book published before the network went on the air?

PAXSON: Because there was nobody in America who thought we would go on the air. Then they didn't think we'd get any viewers. Now they don't think we'll be financially successful. But so far, we're on the air, we're getting viewers, and we're nearing the day of profitability. I'm hopeful that when people read *Threading the Needle* and realize it was printed before PAX TV went on the air, they'll say, My goodness gracious, God had something to do with this.

TAE: And the symbol of PAX TV is a dove and an olive branch.

SAGANSKY: That's right.

TAE: The word "Pax" in Latin means "peace." To what extent are you trying to bring peace into people's homes?

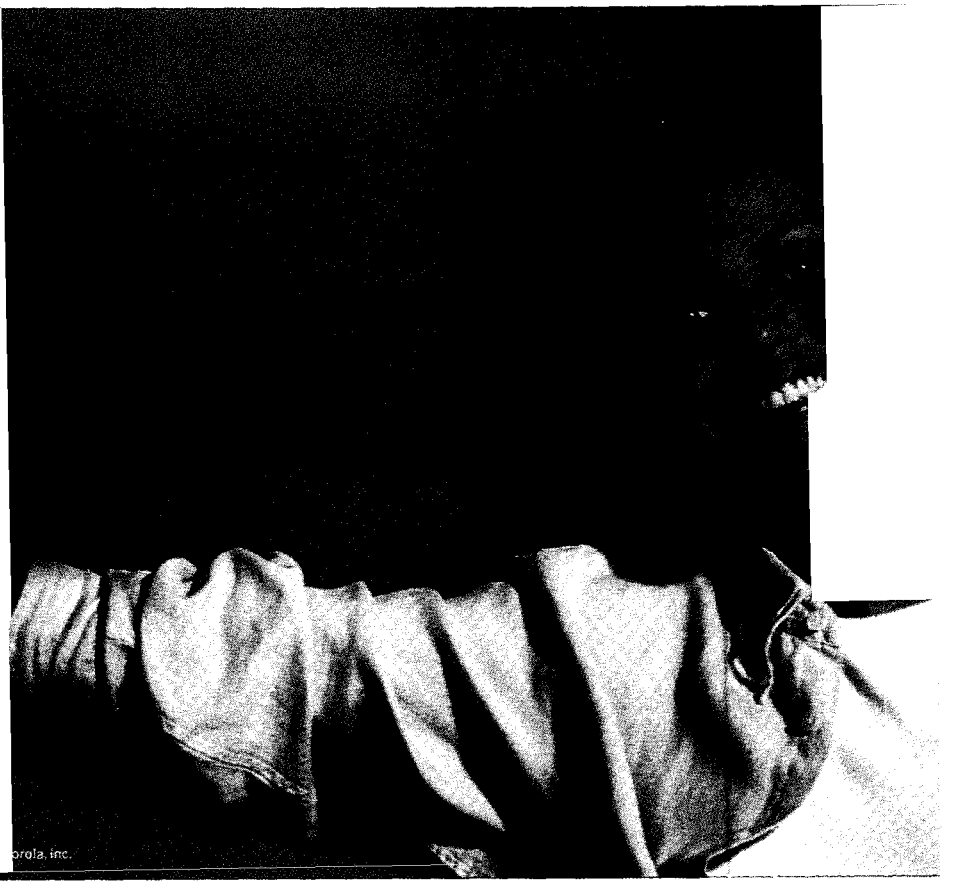
SAGANSKY: I think we're trying to bring peace of mind to people's homes so that their values aren't assaulted when they turn on their television. The values in our shows are going to reflect their values.

PAXSON: We want to provide a peaceful, kinder, and gentler kind of television, and that's why we chose the name "Pax." We wanted to name it so that everyone with an average intelligence would know what it meant, and we put the dove there because the dove is the sign of the Holy Spirit. The olive branch is there because we want to have peace between our races and between differences of opinion. Here is television you can relax with. You can put your kids in front of it and trust it. That's the kind of peace we want to provide the viewer.

TAE: Here's a technical question: Have you been limited by having your network appear on mostly low-powered UHF stations?

PAXSON: Well, these are not low-power UHF stations. They're full power. Almost all of them are 5 million watts. We've built 40 of the 78 stations from scratch. They didn't exist before, and all of them are built with the best towers, transmitters, and antennas money can buy.

SAGANSKY: Of the 180 stations that Fox has, 132 of them are UHF stations. With UPN, 70 out of 78 are UHF. Warner Brothers



WINGS FOR THE SOCIAL BUTTERFLY. *The StarTAC™ 3000 phone. Ingeniously engineered to be a part of you. Smaller than your black book. Light as a feather. And*

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has 56 out of 61. And even ABC, out of 205 stations, how many do you think are UHF? Seventy-one.

PAXSON: Many of the ones we bought were the signal one band. We moved it to a new tower, built a higher tower, increased the power, and put up new antennas which would pick up the fringe areas. So the story that you've read many times in different publications about our signals being "weak" is not true. I think the ratings reflect that, because we now have millions of American homes watching us every night.

SAGANSKY: The fact of the matter is that there are many more UHF stations in the country than there are VHF. Besides, when the Supreme Court upheld cable "must-carry" regulations, that really gave all these UHF stations additional ways to blanket their markets, because they get carried on the local cable networks.

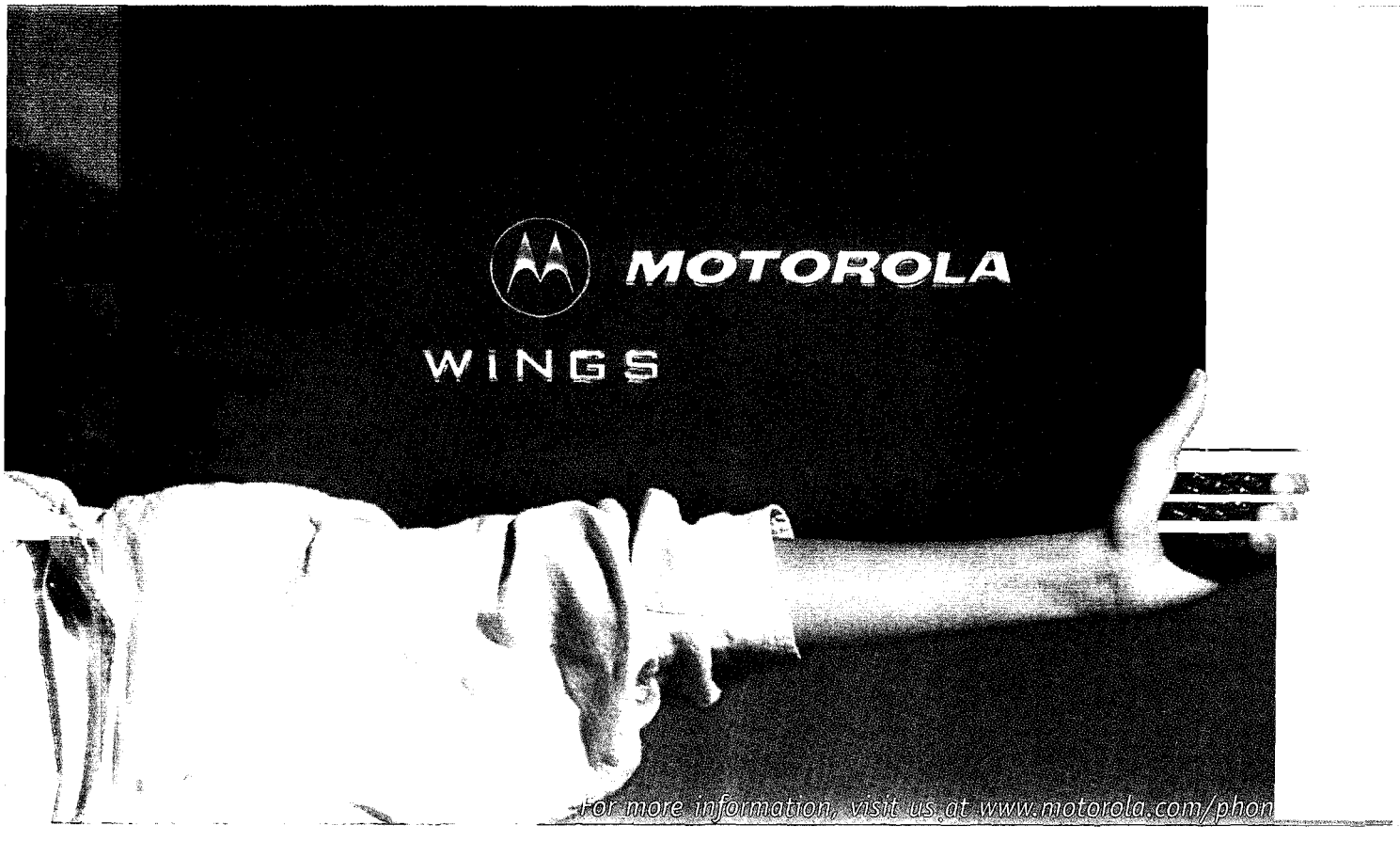
TAE: Movie studios are finding diminishing returns from producing family films—more and more seem to be going direct to video. Why do you think wholesome family-oriented programming will succeed on a TV network when it's not really succeeding at the movies?

SAGANSKY: Why do you think it's not succeeding at the movies?

TAE: Aren't they finding diminishing box office?

SAGANSKY: *Antz* did fine. *Flubber* did fine. *The Nutty Professor* was a huge hit. Those are family films. So I don't know if I agree with your statement.

PAXSON: Research tells us family-oriented programming will succeed. Five weeks into our network the ratings tell us it will. The thousands of letters and incredible press we've generated all substantiate that this is now what America is looking for and turning to. We're elated with the progress of our network. We always said we didn't expect to be everything to everybody, but we thought that there was a large audience out there that would embrace our kind of programming, and our new business plan is well on target. We said we needed a 0.6 rating to break even, and at a 1 we would make money. We're now doing better than that. All of last week, Monday to Sunday, 8:00 to 11:00, we got in the range of a 1.1 or a 1.2. These are better ratings than many of the best-known cable networks are getting. Ted Turner needs a war. The Weather Channel needs a hurricane.



smart enough to remember the numbers of your 20 closest friends. For people who make things happen when they're on the move. Motorola gives you Wings. And Wings set you free.

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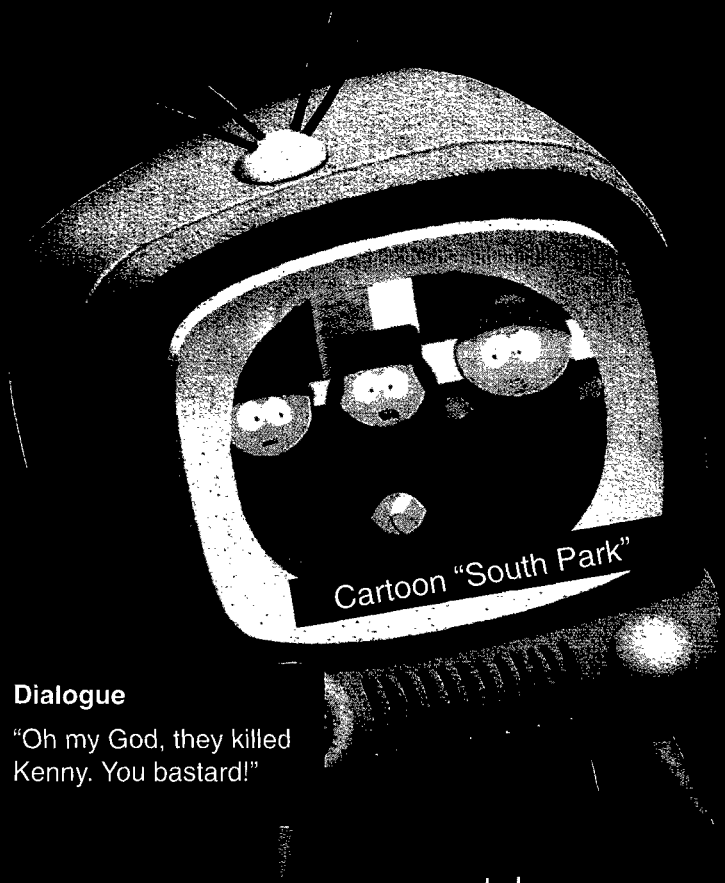
WASTELAND

HOW TODAY'S TRASH

TELEVISION

HARMS AMERICA



Dialogue

"Oh my God, they killed Kenny. You bastard!"

BY KARL ZINSMEISTER

"A vast wasteland." "The boob tube." "The one-eyed monster." "The idiot box." As these venerable descriptions suggest, low-quality television programming is a problem of long standing.

But recently, this old problem has taken on some troubling new dimensions. Thirty years after he coined the phrase "a vast wasteland," former FCC chairman Newton Minow remarked that what TV now offers is a "vast *toxic* wasteland."

It isn't just nags or fanatics who are disturbed by the harsh new face of TV programming in the late 1990s. Here's what the *New York Times* had to say in an April 1998 front-page story:

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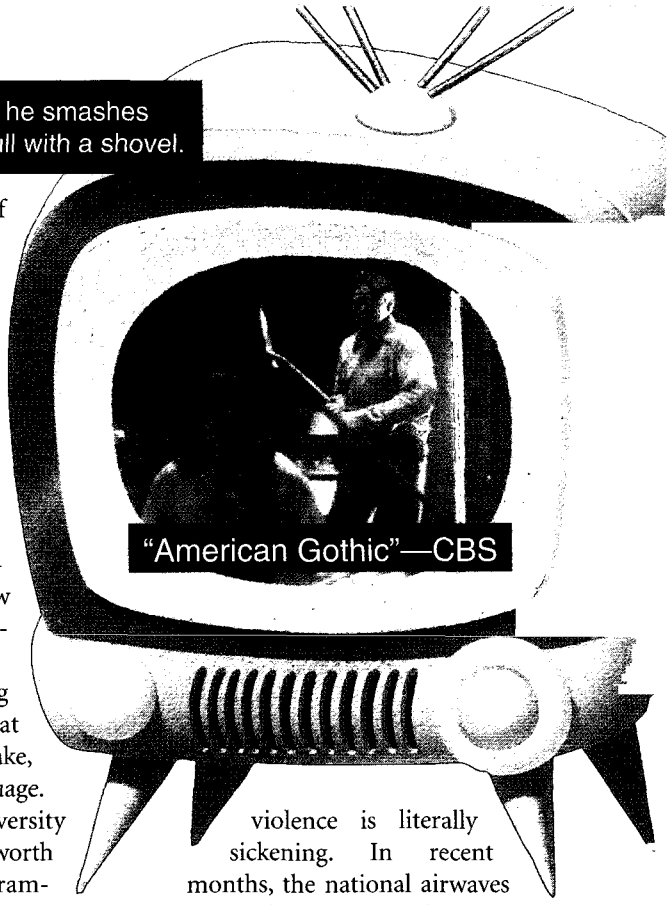


Like a child acting outrageously naughty to see how far he can push his parents, mainstream television this season is flaunting the most vulgar and explicit sex, language, and behavior that it has ever sent into American homes.

A banner headline in the *Wall Street Journal* warned not long ago that, "It's 8 P.M. Your Kids Are Watching Sex on TV." *U.S. News* summarized the trends this way:

To hell with kids—that must be the motto of the new fall TV season.... The family hour is gone.... The story of the fall line-up is the rise of sex. Will the networks ever wise up?

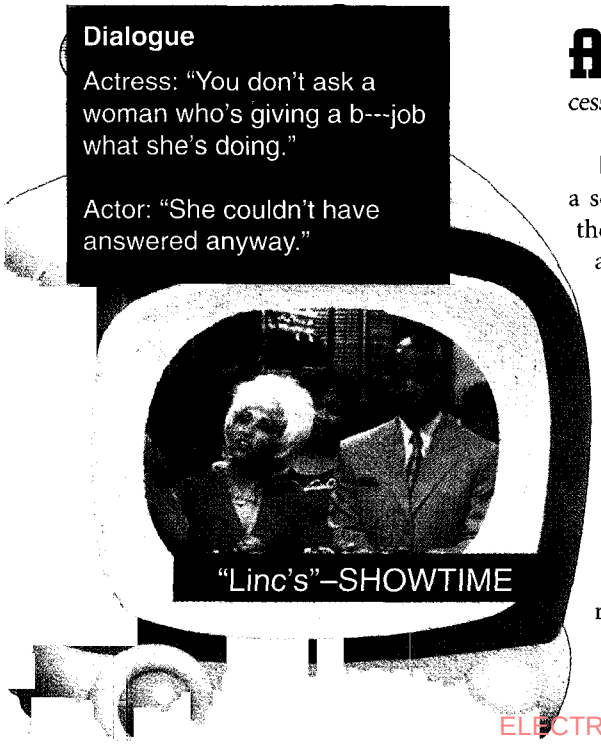
A wide spectrum of Americans are appalled by what passes for TV entertainment these days. A 1998 poll by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that fully two-thirds of all parents say they are concerned "a great deal" about what their children are now exposed to on television. Their biggest complaint is sexual content, followed closely by violence, and then crude language.

Parents are more upset now than they were even just a few seasons ago. The proportion of parents saying they're concerned "a great deal" about TV's sexual content, for instance, has jumped from four out of ten to seven out of ten parents in just the last two years. Two-thirds of the American public say TV programming has *deteriorated* over the last decade.

One result of this mounting dissatisfaction is that Americans are distancing themselves—at least psychologically—from their sets. By a margin of 70 percent to 23 percent the American public now feels it has "very different values" from the TV industry.

That's not such a surprising reaction when you look at what the industry is pumping out. Take, for instance, the matter of language.

A Southern Illinois University study that analyzed two weeks' worth of prime-time network programming in 1990 and then again in 1994 found that the amount of foul language on TV increased 45 percent during those four years. On average, sitcom viewers now endure one dirty word every five minutes. Words like *bitch*, *suck*, and *shit* are now regularly on the airwaves. A typical installment of the drama "Public Morals," shot for a 9:30 P.M. time slot, contained the word *whore* 15 times, *penis* four times, *ass* twice, plus a variety of other choice phrases like *boobs*, *dyke*, and "riding the pony."



AND then there's violence. Consider some of the graphic excesses now depicted on TV:

- One recent CBS drama opened with a scene of a demented father crushing the skull of his young daughter with a shovel.
- An NBC show depicted a doctor slicing open a dead man's head and finding a tentacle wriggling in the brain.
- A Fox drama featured a man buried alive in a bag containing other human body parts.

The most vicious fantasy violence and extended gunplay are now routine. And in today's worst cases, TV violence is literally sickening. In recent months, the national airwaves have been home to gory depictions of impalings, beheadings, exploding bodies, mass gunnings, and even a bloody crucifixion. Cable shows are especially savage.

The Center for Media and Public Affairs has tallied all the violence appearing on the nation's top ten channels during a single day of broadcasting, doing this once in 1992, and then again in 1994. Their snapshots showed that the number of violent scenes on TV increased by 41 percent during that two-year period—to an average of 15 acts of violence per hour per channel, from 6 A.M. until midnight.

Worse, a recent multi-million-dollar study funded by the cable TV industry itself found that in three-quarters of all TV violence, the perpetrators go unpunished. In six cases out of ten no pain is depicted. Fully 84 percent of the time, TV programs show no long-term negative consequences whatever.

Does this matter? Sure it does. There are now more than a thousand separate studies establishing that TV violence encourages undesirable real-life behavior in people of all ages.

Sensing this, more than seven out of ten Americans say they think the TV in-

Karl Zinsmeister is editor in chief of The American Enterprise, *and J. B. Fuqua Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.*

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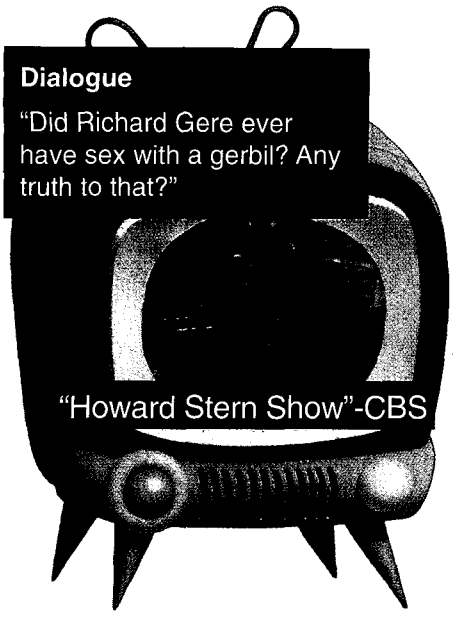

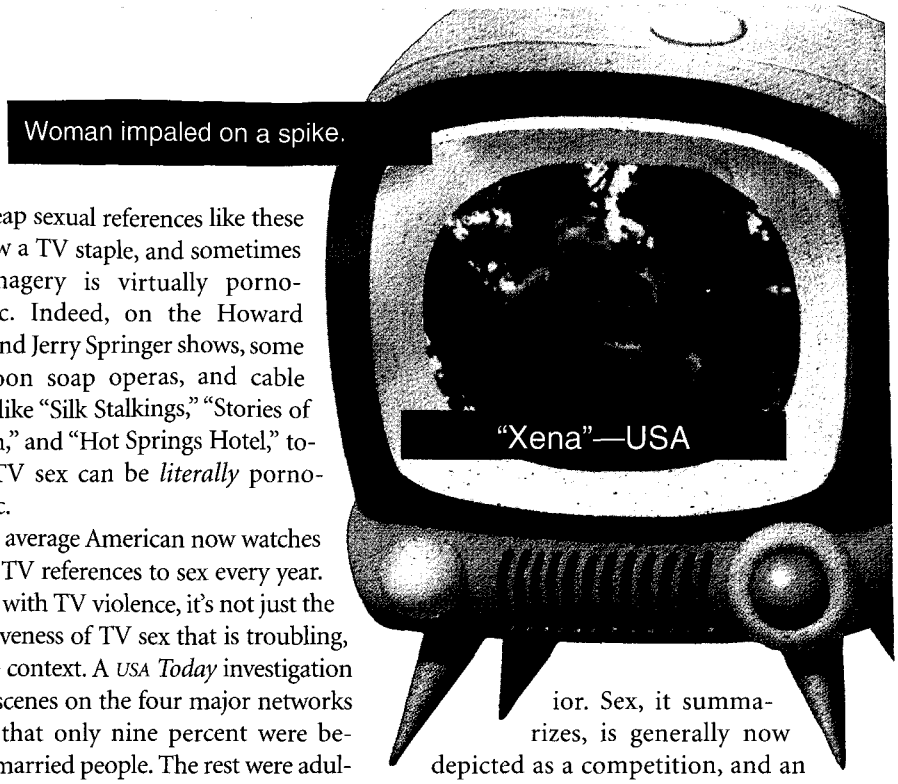

dustry needs to do more to reduce the amount of violence it unleashes on the public. In fact, when asked to name measures that would reduce violent crime "a lot," the public ranks restrictions on TV violence higher than gun control.

Americans tell pollsters they believe TV is even more culpable in another social problem: irresponsible sexuality. And sexual exploitation is featured more prominently in the late 1990s than any other category of TV sleaze.

■ A sitcom that debuted in fall 1998 was set in Abraham Lincoln's White House and had the President drinking an aphrodisiac that inspired homosexual fantasies of soldiers going off to war with "big biceps" and "washboard stomachs."

■ The CBS show "The Nanny," which pitches itself to kids, shows the nanny stumbling home drunk and crawling into bed with her over-medicated employer. The next day neither of them can remember if they've had sex.

■ On another CBS series, a mother accuses her 12-year-old daughter of "spending all morning staring at your little hooters." After hearing the tales of a promiscuous friend, the same mother asks, "My God, don't you ever get your period?"

■ On Fox, an oversexed teenager describes a bus ride this way: "Almost every man on the bus offered me his seat...though nobody was willing to stand up to let me have it. Then, one delightful turban-clad chap...asked me if I wanted to rub his 'magic lamp' and watch the genie come out."

Cheap sexual references like these are now a TV staple, and sometimes the imagery is virtually pornographic. Indeed, on the Howard Stern and Jerry Springer shows, some afternoon soap operas, and cable shows like "Silk Stalkings," "Stories of Passion," and "Hot Springs Hotel," today's TV sex can be *literally* pornographic.

The average American now watches 14,000 TV references to sex every year. And as with TV violence, it's not just the pervasiveness of TV sex that is troubling, but the context. A USA *Today* investigation of sex scenes on the four major networks found that only nine percent were between married people. The rest were adulterous, teen, homosexual, or otherwise non-marital.

A UCLA study finds that three out of ten prime-time shows aimed at children now include sex talk and sexual behavior. Sex, it summarizes, is generally now depicted as a competition, and an "exciting amusement for people of all ages." University of North Carolina professor Jane Brown, who has studied this subject in depth, concludes that TV is "so filled with sex it's hard for any kid,

THE NEW YORK TIMES

New TV Stretches Limits of Taste

From an April 6, 1998 article by Lawrie Mifflin in the New York Times*:*

This television season's stretching of the boundaries of taste has reignited opposition from some public figures. Teachers and school principals have sent notes home warning parents about certain shows, like the cartoon "South Park."

"I'd say there's been a quantum leap downward this year in terms of adolescent, vulgar language and attempts to treat sexuality in shocking terms," said Robert Lichter director of the Center for Media and Public Affairs, a nonpartisan research group in Washington. "People used to complain that television was aimed at the mind of a 12-year-old. Now it seems aimed at the hormones of a 14-year-old."

Network executives tend to dispute that anyone is deliberately pushing the envelope of pop-culture propriety to attract viewers. Stations and cable operators make the calls on what is acceptable fare, and they say television reflects the culture, which has grown more permissive.

In Seattle, one group of 15-year-olds has a "Dawson's Creek"-watching party each Tuesday, despite the reluctance of their parents.

"We tried to put the kibosh on it," said Nancy Stokley, whose daughter has had friends over to watch it and has gone to others' homes. "We said, 'Hey, this is a school night, you know. This is ridiculous.' But they are all quite into it. It has hit a nerve."

Carol Orme-Jackson, of Cambridge, Massachusetts, also found out through a reporter's inquiries that her 14-year-old daughter watches "Dawson's Creek" at friends' houses. Ms. Orme-Jackson said she was not worried by the talk about sex *per se*, but "that this kind of trashy life style becomes glamourized."

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Seeking Family-friendly Programming

From a September 4, 1998 article by Brian Steinberg and Tara Parker-Pope in the Wall Street Journal:

Are the world's biggest advertisers powerful enough to take the sleaze out of television?

Hollywood may soon find out. A coming meeting of some of the world's biggest advertisers will test the limits of how much influence Madison Avenue has over TV programming. The group includes Procter & Gamble Co., Johnson & Johnson, Coca-Cola Co., Sears, Roebuck & Co. and Ford Motor Co. The forum plans to meet to talk about ways advertisers can join together to influence the shows network executives put on the air.

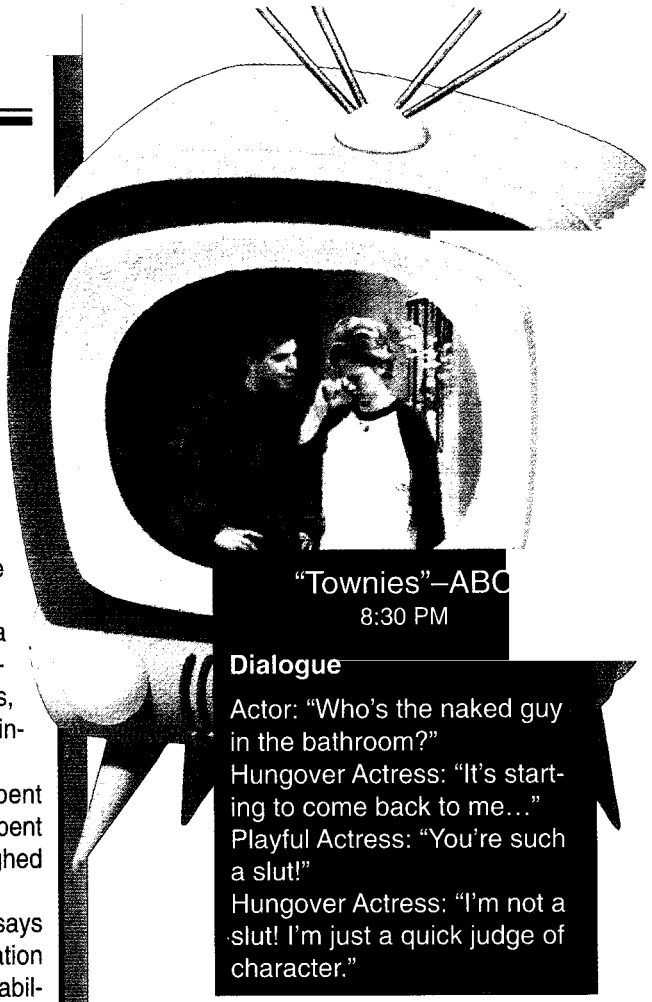
"We want access to high-quality, family-friendly programming that attracts a mass audience," says P&G spokeswoman Gretchen Briscoe. The company already influences programming by the shows it supports with its advertising dollars, but P&G is "only one advertiser," says Ms. Briscoe. "It's going to take a collective industry effort."

Together, the advertisers would wield remarkable clout. In 1996 P&G spent $1.2 billion to advertise on broadcast TV, cable and radio. The same year, Ford spent $536 million, Sears spent $364 million, J&J almost $663 million, and Coke weighed in at $306 million.

"It's a formidable group because of the people who have agreed to do it," says Ave Butensky, president of the Television Bureau of Advertising, a trade association funded by U.S. television stations. "Whether it has any teeth will depend on their ability to put it together in a meaningful fashion."

John Costello, Sears' executive vice president in charge of advertising, says the retailer views the coming meeting as a chance to "have a dialogue" on what can be done "to encourage a greater selection of family-oriented programming."

Currently, advertisers compete against each other for placement on popular family-oriented shows. "Everybody would like to be out there" on Hallmark made-for-TV movie presentations and similar family programs, says Lois Wyse, president of Cleveland's Wyse Advertising, who worked for 30 years as the ad agency for jelly maker J.M. Smucker Co. "It's hard to get on, and it's hard to stay on."



"Townies"–ABC
8:30 PM

Dialogue

Actor: "Who's the naked guy in the bathroom?"
Hungover Actress: "It's starting to come back to me…"
Playful Actress: "You're such a slut!"
Hungover Actress: "I'm not a slut! I'm just a quick judge of character."

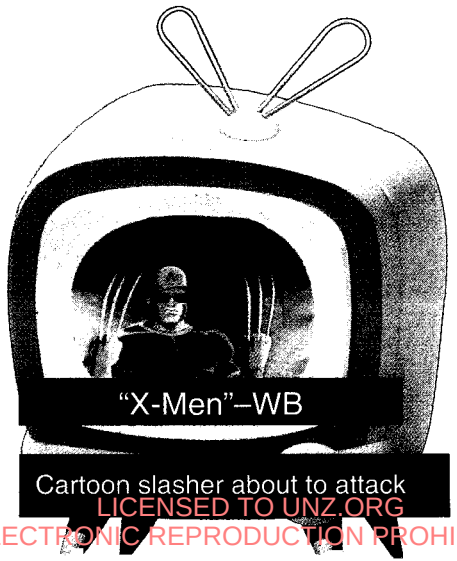
THE collapse of all standards on television has taken place across every program category, channel, and broadcast time. At 8 P.M., right in the middle of what used to be known as the family hour, you can now find a sex-soaked program for teens called "Dawson's Creek." One recent episode featured

continued on p. 29

even a critic, to resist. I think of the media as our true sex educators."

A *U.S. News* poll found that 83 percent of all Americans are now troubled by TV depictions of sex. More than seven out of ten say TV encourages immorality in this area, according to an *L.A. Times* poll.

Unfortunately, the men and women stoking TV's sexual flames could hardly care less. On that same survey question where 83 percent of the public expressed concern over TV sex, only *38* percent of the Hollywood elite had any reservations at all. Writer and director Lionel Chetwynd notes that "The idea that family viewing includes some sense of sexual propriety doesn't seem to have sunk into the Hollywood community."



"X-Men"–WB

Cartoon slasher about to attack

Male striptease on Fox's "Melrose Place"

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Standards in the Age of Anything Goes

From a September 20, 1998 article by Warren Berger in the New York Times:

Last week, Fox ran an on-air promotion for a pair of sitcoms. To make the point that the shows were sassy and sexy compared with tamer Friday night programming on other channels, a voice-over announced, "We ran the censors off, and boy, does it show!"

It's easy to see the appeal of such a sales pitch to the much-coveted youth audience. But for more mature viewers who've been battered by Jerry Springer's cat fights, Howard Stern's genitalia gags, "South Park's" scatological cartoon children, and "Dawson's Creek's" libidinous teen-agers, the idea of one more television guardian who has turned tail and run for cover may not be particularly comforting.

Certainly, there has been no shortage of public and media outcry as raunchy programming has begun to pervade television in recent months, spanning the dial and the daily schedule from Springer in the morning to scantily clad porn stars on the E! channel in the afternoon, from "Ally McBeal" salivating over a well-endowed nude male model during prime time to late-night sex-obsessed gabfests on CBS's "Howard Stern Radio Show" and MTV's "Loveline." Even veteran media watchers are expressing dismay.

"When it comes to violating traditional canons of taste, it seems that anything goes on television right now," observes Mark Crispin Miller, a professor of media studies at New York University. "In fact, tastelessness is the new orthodoxy."

Rarely, though, has anyone asked what happened to the censors. As Mr. Stern and Mr. Springer parade all of those naked, only slightly pixelated strippers before the camera, where are the eagle eyes who, just a few years ago, fretted about glimpses of David Caruso's rear end on "NYPD Blue"?

Actually, many censors skipped town more than a decade ago, as the broadcast networks drastically reduced the size of their internal Standards and Practices departments. These in-house watchdogs held sway at the big three networks [until they] were cut in half in the 1980s—partly for budgetary reasons but also in response to a changing television landscape. The real pressure came from the new cable channels, which faced less government regulation than broadcasters and took the position that their programming could be more risqué because viewers had signed up for the service and knew what to expect.

As network standards departments weakened, producers stepped up the assault on censorship rules. The rules were first broken "by classy, well-written, intelligent shows like 'Hill Street Blues' and 'St. Elsewhere,'" says Robert Thompson, director of Syracuse University's Center for the Study of Popular Television. (The challenge of getting around the censors may have actually pushed those shows to be more creative and subtle when exploring adult themes.) However, says Mr. Thompson, once these shows claimed new territory in terms of what could be shown and said on the networks, "that opened everything up for the sleazier shows to move in and take over."

Which brings us to today's landscape and raises the question: Were the censors all bad? The search for alternative means of regulation, like the rating system implemented last year, doesn't seem to be going great guns. "The people who wanted ratings to put the brakes on this new explosion of raunchy television saw just the opposite happen," says Mr. Thompson. "Anybody should have seen this coming. If you give producers the opportunity to use a TV-MA rating, it's an invitation to make TV-MA programs." Indeed, by affixing an MA rating on "South Park," a channel like Comedy Central, whose Standards and Practices department consists of exactly one person, can feel that it has acted responsibly.... That seems reasonable enough—except to parents whose children are clamoring, and perhaps sneaking off, to watch the show because it is topic A in the schoolyard.

To some extent, the rating system provides broadcasters and cable networks an opportunity to wash their hands of monitoring and occasionally censoring content, thereby freeing them from any esthetic responsibility for what they transmit into living rooms. [So] gobs of sleazy content have slithered under the gates in the past year....

As Mr. Miller points out, most advertisers have overcome their old fears of sex because such programming delivers the young-adult demographic and tends to stop channel surfers in their tracks. (How many can cruise past Mr. Stern's show without at least taking a peek to see what he's up to?) In some ways, raunch is the safest kind of programming right now.

Meanwhile, there has been an odd reversal. While it once required courage to decry the censors, now it takes backbone to uphold any kind of censoring standards. Out there alone on the last front lines of censorship are local station owners and network affiliates, who must decide when to redraw the line that has been all but erased by the networks, cable channels, and syndicators....

It seems likely that the task of minding the gates of good taste will increasingly fall not just to the local station managers but also to series creators. With less outside censorship, they are forced into being censors of their own work. Philip Rosenthal, executive producer of "Everybody Loves Raymond," says he imposes his own limitations on what characters can and can't say "because it's too easy to just go for the raunchy line," he says.

"I haven't even seen anyone from Standards and Practices the whole time I've been working on the show," he says. "That gives you freedom, but it also makes you pause. Who is going to censor you if not yourself?"

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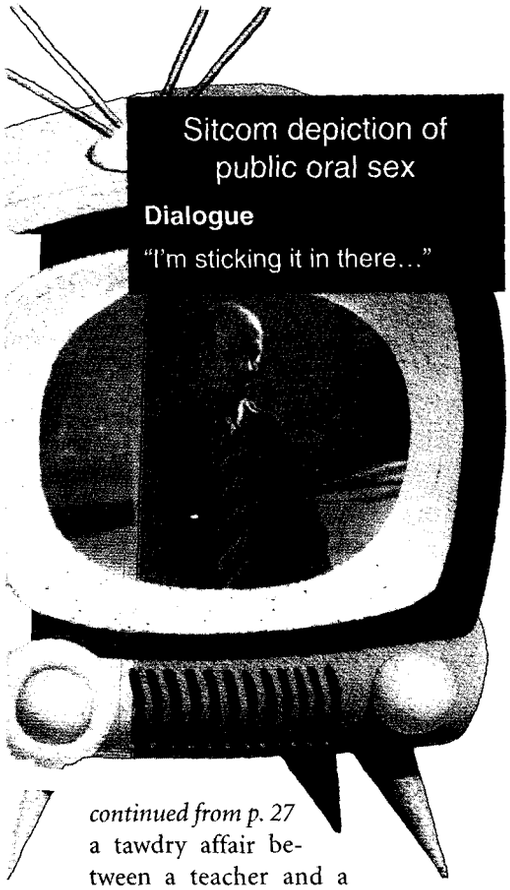

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a tawdry affair between a teacher and a high school student.

The most popular comedy show among kids today is a cartoon called "South Park" that features foul-mouthed third-graders in episodes bearing titles like "Cartman's Mom Is a Dirty Slut." Every week, one of the children in "South Park" dies a horrible death. In May 1998, a 12-year-old boy from Ocean City, Maryland, killed himself and left a note telling his parents to watch "South Park" to understand why. Comedy Central, which airs the program, issued a press release expressing its sorrow.

Mid-day talk shows are another TV genre that scraped to new lows in 1998. "The Jerry Springer Show," which is heavily promoted to teenagers via specials on MTV and other means, now regularly features on-camera brawls (many of them apparently staged) among panelists confessing sexual and other misdeeds. On one show, the host offered audience members dollar bills to disrobe and act out on camera, with various body parts lightly

That's Entertainment?

From a November 13, 1998 essay by Steve Allen in the Wall Street Journal:

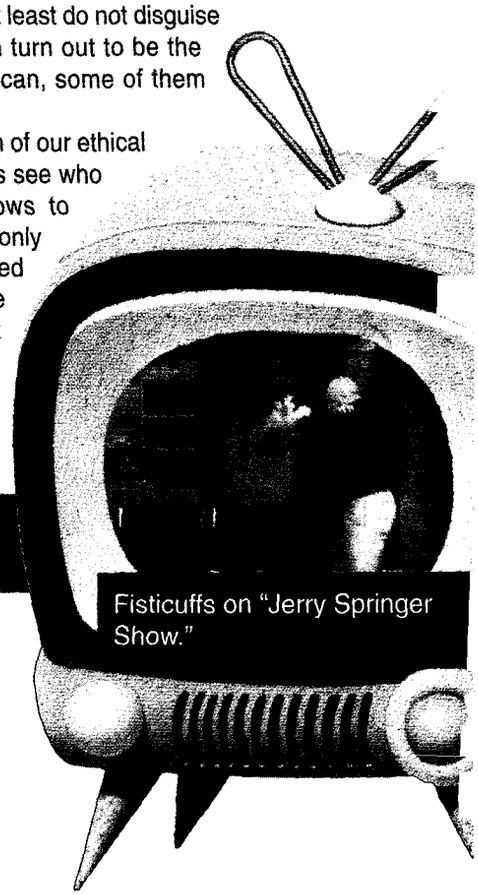
All across the political spectrum, thoughtful observers are appalled by what passes for TV entertainment these days. No one can claim that the warning cries are simply the exaggerations of conservative spoil-sports or fundamentalist preachers.

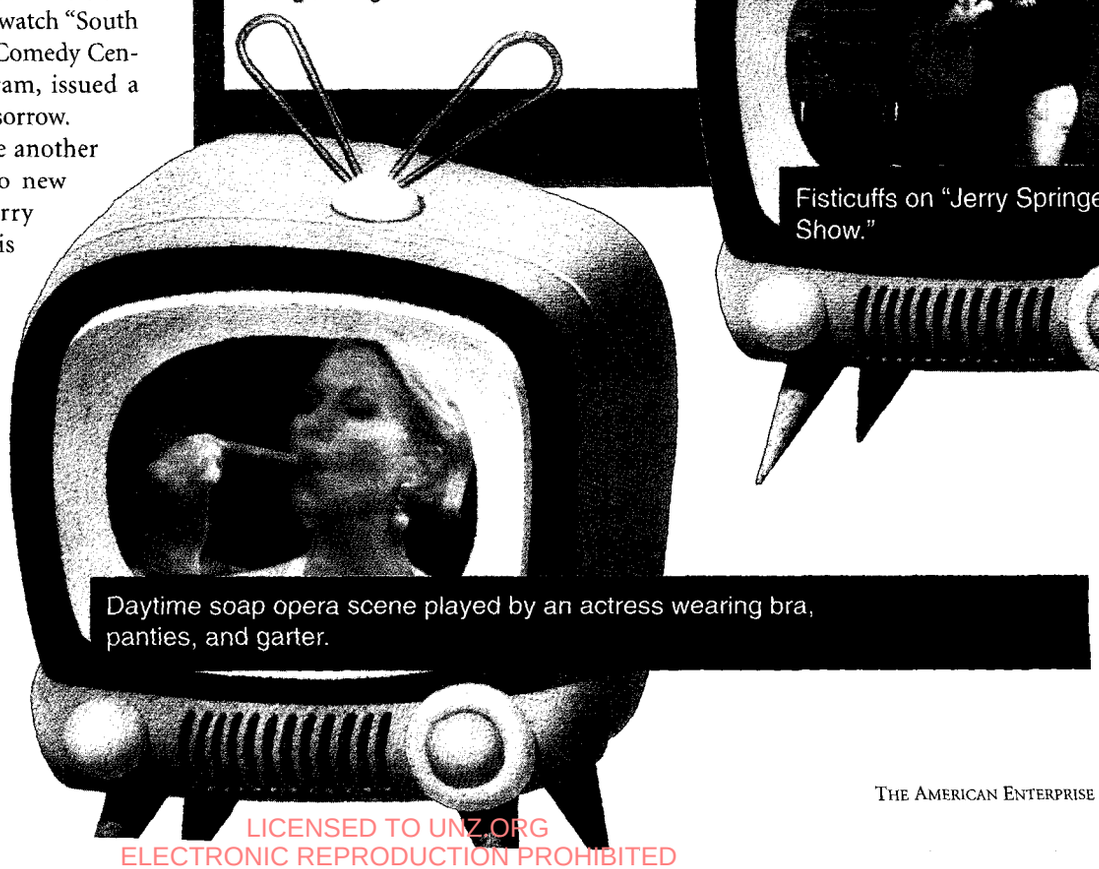
I have been hearing from dozens of colleagues who agree that the sleaze and classless garbage on TV in recent years exceeds the boundaries of what has traditionally been referred to as Going Too Far. Popular comedians such as Mort Sahl, Bill Cosby, Bob Hope, Sid Caesar, Tim Allen, Milton Berle, Tom Poston, Louie Nye and Bob Newhart—to name only a few—are horrified at what has happened to the beautiful and socially necessary art of comedy. Obviously some of these gentlemen occasionally work a little rough in a nightclub—none of us are saints—but we draw the line when it comes to TV and radio.

In 1993, Ken Auletta wrote an insightful feature in *The New Yorker* reporting the answers of the film industry's top executives to the simple question of whether they would want their own children to see some of their productions. Many of the executives dodged and weaved—and implicitly answered "no." Since then, the problem of cultural coarsening has only gotten worse. Mr. Auletta's question must continue to be asked.

Our radio and TV stations and networks, after all, are not owned by Larry Flynt or Al Goldstein—two pornographers who at least do not disguise what they are doing. The offenders often turn out to be the country-club elite, many of them Republican, some of them proudly conservative and church-going.

Let us, by all means, direct the beam of our ethical concern on this till-now dark corner. Let us see who scurries away, or—if we are lucky—vows to mend his ways. That will happen, though, only if the finger of public disapproval is pointed at specific individuals and entities. There are hundreds of other organizations that might join in. This is an occasion for doing the right thing.


Fisticuffs on "Jerry Springer Show."


Daytime soap opera scene played by an actress wearing bra, panties, and garter.

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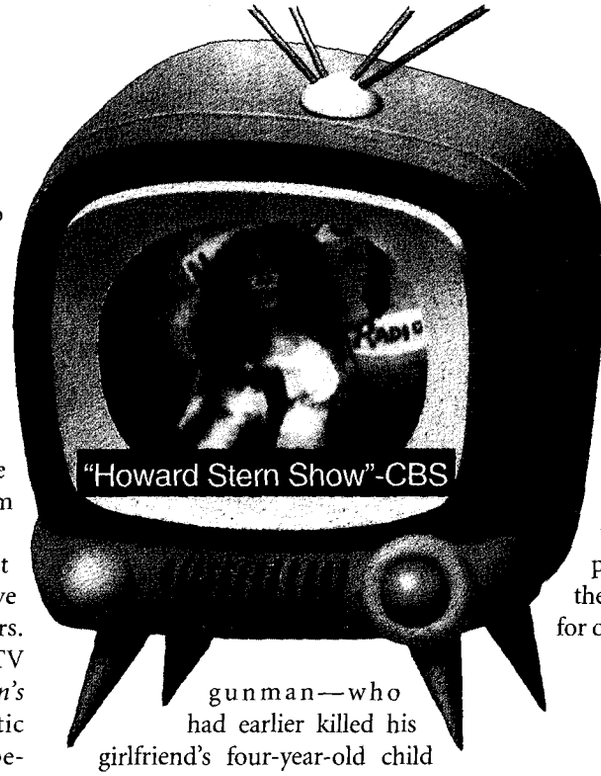
fuzzified by special effects just to keep things family-friendly.

Turning to late-night, the big news in the 1998-99 season is Howard Stern's new show on CBS, opposite "Saturday Night Live." In announcing the program Stern promised that "we'll have sex and nudity and lesbians. Standards have gone down to an all-time low, and I'm here to represent it."

It isn't only on entertainment shows that television producers have started acting like salacious voyeurs. Earlier this year three Los Angeles TV stations broke into some *children's* programming to provide voyeuristic live news coverage of a stand-off between police and an unstable man. They aired close-up video as the man went to his pickup, took out a shotgun, and blew his brains out.

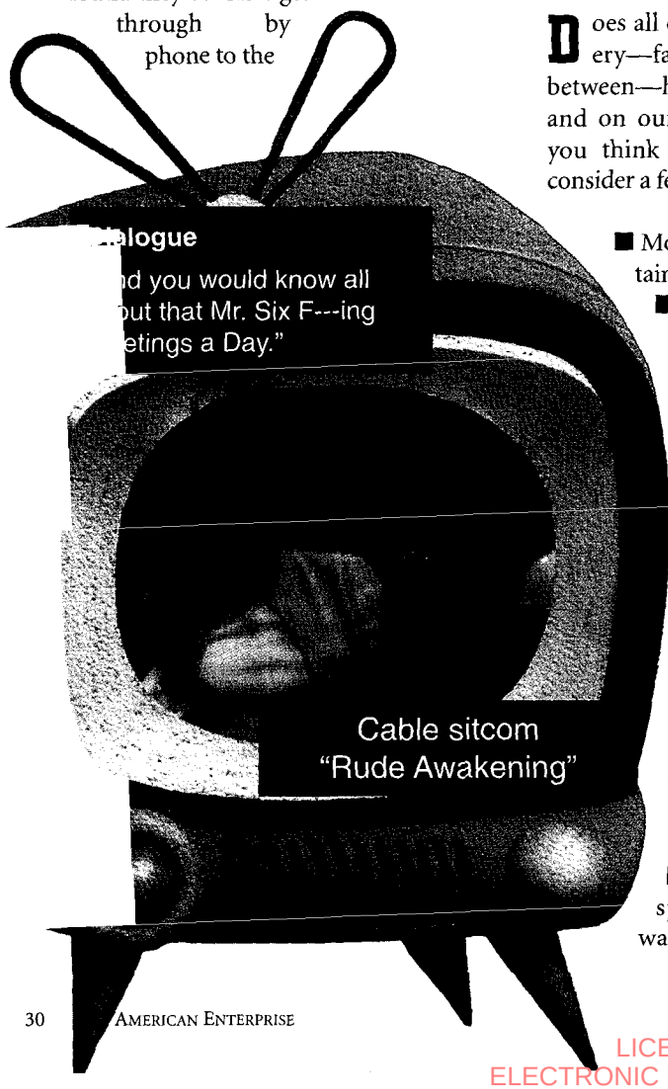
A few weeks later, when a hostage crisis developed in Tampa, Florida, the police found they couldn't get through by phone to the gunman—who had earlier killed his girlfriend's four-year-old child and three policemen. It turned out the line was busy because the criminal was being interviewed by the local media. In the interview, which was played over and over on radio and TV, the gunman promised to kill himself. He later did just that.

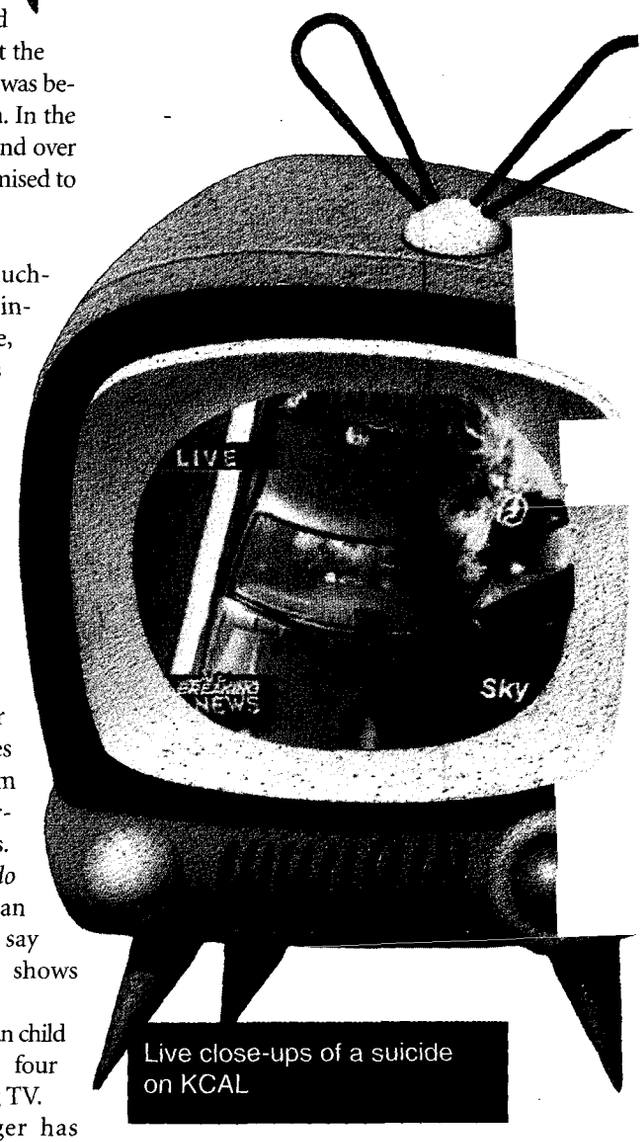


Does all of this televised debauchery—fantasy, real-life, and in-between—have effects on people, and on our nation's future? As you think that question over, consider a few simple facts:

- Most homes now contain three or more TVs.
- 54 percent of children now have their own sets in their bedrooms.
- Only 30 percent of children say their families have rules prohibiting them from watching certain kinds of shows. And of those who *do* have rules, more than four out of ten say they've seen those shows anyway.
- The average American child now spends nearly four hours a day watching TV.
- A typical teenager has spent far more hours watching the tube than he has spent over the course of his life in school.
- And the average adult, by the time he's ready to meet his maker, will have invested more time on television than on all the jobs he's ever held combined.

Given the time people commit to television, how can we believe they are not influenced by it? And if this great, all-powerful medium appeals to the worst in us rather than the best, what will the consequences be for our future?





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Wasteland

THE VIDEO

THE AMERICAN ENTERPRISE has produced, in conjunction with the Center for Media and Public Affairs, a powerful 20-minute video that combines the facts and figures presented in Karl Zinsmeister's article with actual footage from approximately 50 different current television programs.

This polished and sobering documentary, narrated by film critic and author Michael Medved, provides convincing firsthand evidence of the scope of today's TV Trash problem. It will interest many TAE subscribers and is appropriate for screening before community, business, educational, and philanthropic groups concerned with this issue.

Warning: Because it documents the graphic violence, sex, and obscene language now common on TV programming, this video is not appropriate for viewing by children.

As a public service, TAE is making this video available for $8, the cost of copying, shipping, and handling. Follow the instructions below to order.

Send me the video

"Wasteland: How Today's Trash TV Harms America"

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State/Zip _____

I want _____ copies at $ 8.00 each = $_____ total

☐ Check enclosed (make out to *The American Enterprise*)

☐ Charge my VISA/MC/AMEX

card#_____ expires_____

signature _____

Copy or tear out and send to:

The American Enterprise 1150 17th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036

or PHONE 1-202-862-5870

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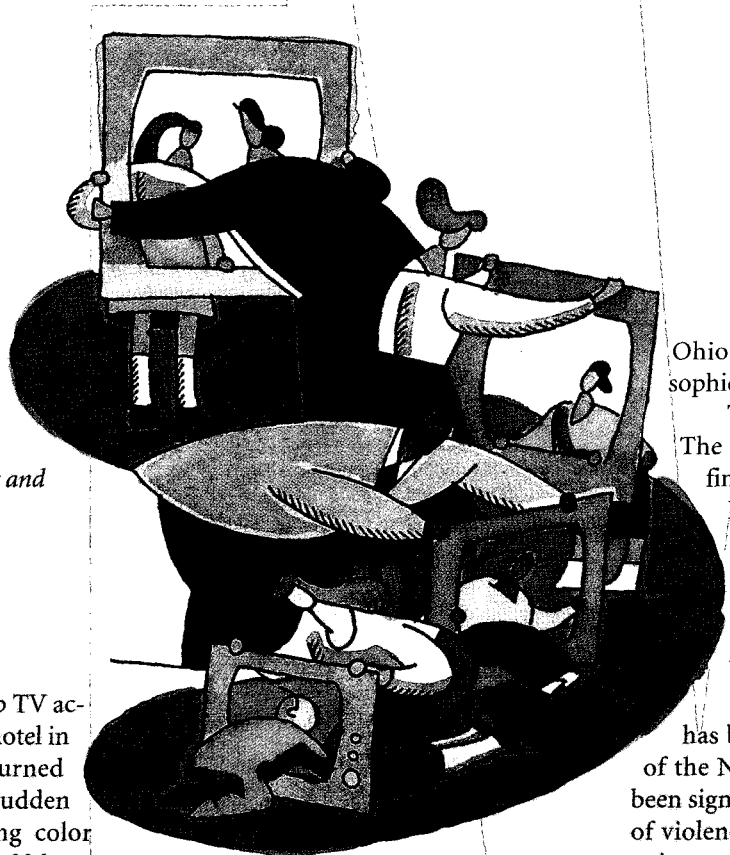
THREE U.S. SENATORS SPEAK OUT:

WHY CLEANING UP TELEVISION IS IMPORTANT TO THE NATION



These remarks are from presentations to the conference on TV programming held in Washington, D. C. in December by the Center for Media & Public Affairs and The American Enterprise.

SENATOR PAUL SIMON
(D-Illinois, retired)

I got into the effort to clean up TV accidentally. I checked into a motel in Lasalle County, Illinois, and turned on my television set. All of a sudden there in front of me in living color someone was being cut in half by a chainsaw. Now, I'm old enough to know it wasn't real, but it bothered me that night. I thought, what happens to a ten-year-old who watches this?

So I called my office the next morning and said, "Someone has to have done research on this; find out what research has taken place." My staff came back with all kinds of research showing that entertainment violence harms us.

I called a meeting of representatives of the TV industry and said, "I don't want government censorship, but I think we have to recognize we have a problem, and I'd like you to come up with the answers." One of those present said, "Violence on television doesn't do any harm." I replied, "You remind me of the Tobacco Institute people who come into my office saying they have research that cigarettes don't do any harm." Then they said, "Well, we can't collaborate on this because it would violate the antitrust laws."

That led me to introduce a bill that included an exemption in the antitrust laws for television violence, and to give you some sense of the breadth of interest in this, my co-sponsors eventually included Senator Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) and Senator Howard Metzenbaum (D-Ohio). Now that's a broad philosophical spectrum.

The industry opposed my bill. The ACLU opposed my bill. But we finally got the bill passed. George Bush signed it. And both broadcasters and cable operators began to adopt standards. I have to say they were fairly anemic, but they were better than nothing.

On the broadcast side, there has been progress. Arthur Nielsen of the Nielsen ratings says there have been significant improvements in terms of violence on the broadcast side—not going as far as needed, but still improvements. On the cable side, improvement is not perceptible.

At a meeting of about 700 TV and movie executives where I spoke, I said, "Many of you disagree with my conclusions. Why don't you do your own analysis of TV violence." And to their credit, both the broadcast and the cable industries authorized three-year studies. That research has recently come back, and I think they got more than they bargained for. The many damaging findings included the fact that three-quarters of all entertainment violence shows no immediate adverse consequences for the person

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committing the violence. The lessons for children and for adults, but particularly for children, is that violence pays.

The entertainment industry has periodically changed what it does and improved our society. For instance, if you look back at old movies and TV clips, you'll see the heros and heroines smoking and drinking much more heavily than they do today. I think this change is one of the reasons there has been a diminution in smoking and drinking in our society.

When television glamorizes violence, we imitate that. We have the most violent television of any nation on the earth with the possible exception of Japan, and there is one huge difference: In Japan, the people who commit the violence are the bad guys; people one wouldn't want to associate with. In American television, too frequently, those who commit the violence are the good guys.

The V-chip and ratings can offer an assist against objectionable TV content, but they are not a substitute for the industry's being responsible. First of all because children are technologically adept. I can't even program my VCR to tape a program. I have my son-in-law do it for me.

Second, the Nielsen ratings clearly show that in the impoverished areas in our country, which are also the high-crime areas, children watch 50 percent more television than they do in other areas; the TV set becomes a companion and babysitter.

Third, you're an unusual parent if, when Johnny or Jane go next door to play, you say, "Just a second. I want to find out what the neighbors have on television."

Finally, as a recent University of Wisconsin study shows, adult ratings, instead of repelling, frequently have an appeal for TV-watching children.

Another argument favored by the TV industry is, "We're just giving the public what it wants." That's the worst excuse of all. It is the same excuse that people in politics, business, and other fields use to rationalize irresponsible decisions. We ought to expect from the leaders in any field some sense of responsibility, some long-term social outlook.

I am not suggesting there be no violence on television. If you do a story on the Civil War, there's going to be some violence. *Schindler's List*, the most moving film I've ever seen, was on television, but it was on television late at night, when it should have been. And it didn't glorify violence. It associated violence with hurt, people crying. That's truthful.

It's a strange situation for an industry to resist being given new powers, but so far the broadcasters don't want the authority and responsibility to control their programming.

—Sen. Sam Brownback

SENATOR SAM BROWNBACK
(R-Kansas)

TV content has attracted Congress's attention for the past several years because a lot of people across the country are upset.

The main problem with TV is not that a few scenes or even a few shows are horrifically shocking, but rather the near-constant stream of sleaze. Violence, irresponsibility, and vulgarity are staples of prime time. The majority of sexual relationships portrayed are extra-marital or pre-marital, and have no negative consequences. TV scenes of illicit sex rarely include AIDS, unwanted pregnancy, or heartbreak. Television strongly implies that adultery and teen sex are normal, even desirable, when the truth is that such things easily lead to grief, poverty, and shattered lives.

Senator Lieberman and I have co-hosted hearings the past two years on the impact of television sex and violence. We've been struggling with exactly what to do about this problem. I think it's critical that we talk a lot about it, that we put it high on the priority list, and that we look for solutions.

One idea several senators have put forward, so far with little success, is encouraging a voluntary code of conduct within the industry. We'd like to help reinvigorate and bring back the voluntary code that the broadcasting industry abided by until a 1982 ruling by the courts suggested that cooperating on standards might violate antitrust laws. Last year I introduced a bill that would remove this potential violation of antitrust laws and let the industry work together on standards. We're going to try again this year.

Entertainment companies have fought me on this. It's a strange situation for an industry to resist being given new powers, but so far the National Association of Broadcasters and others have been uncooperative. They don't want the authority and responsibility to control their programming. But we're not giving up, because this project is very important.

Some people in the industry assert, "We don't make the culture. We just reflect it." But actually, television is a very powerful culture-shaping medium. As a candidate for public office, I've found that TV advertising is the key to transmitting a message today. If I could get by without buying it, I would in a heartbeat. But I can't.

What today's TV programmers are actually holding up is not a mirror but a mirage. The world of TV characters is, thank goodness, far more violent, disturbed, and perverse than typical American life. There are more Amish people in the United States than there are serial murderers. There are far more pastors than prostitutes. But you'd never know it from TV.

Does this matter? Of course. Television is the dominant influence on our culture. It rules the world because of its invasiveness, because of the impact it has on people. We all know by watching our own children watch television that TV has clear effects, and studies confirm this. Consider just a couple of current examples:

• A recent study by Professor Mark Singer at Case Western University found that sustained TV viewing was linked to

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aggression, anxiety, and anger and violent behavior in children.

• The American Medical Association recently concluded that "exposure to violence in entertainment increases aggressive behavior...and contributes to Americans' sense that they live in a 'mean society.'"

These kinds of findings keep building and building.

We have to be much more aggressive in combating this problem. Abraham Lincoln taught that "He who molds public sentiment goes deeper than he who enacts statutes or pronounces decisions." I think what we have to do is mold public sentiment, inform people that television is hurting our children, and start moving to correct that.

My office stands ready and willing to do anything we can to help this effort, but I don't think you can legislate the problem out of existence: The First Amendment's protections on speech are clear and appropriate, and I wouldn't want to try. Instead, we have to change behavior in this area the old-fashioned way, the hard way, where you just continually talk, tell the story, push and encourage.

We need to tell the TV industry, "You are influencing our young and our nation, and it's not for the good. And we can't afford it as a people."

SEN. JOSEPH LIEBERMAN
(D-Connecticut)

WE can't expect individual broadcasters to unilaterally institute controls on the kind of material they put out—not with the competitive pressures being what they are. That is why I strongly believe that one of the best things the industry could do to address the concern over exploitative shows would be to bring back a set of basic standards that would insulate programmers from the temptation to be more shocking or titillating than their competitors.

The National Association of Broadcasters maintained such a code for more than three decades and then chose to abandon it after a few of its provisions (restricting advertising only) were struck down by the courts on antitrust grounds. Re-reading the NAB standards today (see adjoining box), I am struck by what a powerful statement of citizenship and community responsibility it was, and what a mistake it was to scrap it. America's families have paid the price for that decision, by way of sinking standards and vanishing values.

My argument is the same one made last year by ABC president Bob Iger, who said in a speech:

> The thing that differentiates television from other businesses is that so many of our program decisions impact the public in a powerful way. I believe there is room on the air for adult-oriented programs, provided they are high in quality. Programs like "Jerry Springer" are another matter. I question the logic of putting him on the air, and I believe the entire industry suffers from the association. Programs that are embarrassments to our business will, in the long run, alienate our viewers. Let's make these improvements—without any government intervention.

Good idea.

Despite the troubling direction the industry has been heading in, I still believe that the lion's share of local broadcasters take seriously their obligation to serve the public interest. And it is in that spirit that we are asking for their help in making television a safer place for children, by beginning to work together to develop a new code of standards for the next century. If help from Capitol Hill is necessary, rest assured such a measure would fly through both houses of Congress.

We are not calling for a return to the 1950s, but simply a respite from the graphic gunplay and foreplay that increasingly dominate the tube and send the worst messages to the public. We don't want to take away broadcaster discretion. We simply want them to take it back and use it responsibly.

Excerpts from the voluntary Code of Conduct first promulgated by the National Association of Broadcasters in 1952, which continued to govern network television until 1983.

• [I]n selecting program subjects and themes, great care must be exercised to be sure that the treatment and presentation are made in good faith and not for the purpose of sensationalism or to shock or exploit the audience or appeal to prurient interests or morbid curiosity.

• Broadcasters have a special responsibility toward children. Programs designed primarily for children should take into account the range of interests and needs of children, from instructional and cultural material to a wide variety of entertainment material. In their totality, programs should contribute to the sound, balanced development of children to help them achieve a sense of the world at large and informed adjustments to their society.

• Violence, physical or psychological, may only be projected in responsibly handled contexts, not used exploitatively. Programs involving violence should present the consequences of it to its victims and perpetrators. Presentation of the details of violence should avoid the excessive, the gratuitous and the instructional.

• The presentation of marriage, family, and similarly important human relationships, and material with sexual connotations, shall not be treated exploitatively or irresponsibly, but with sensitivity.

• Above and beyond the requirements of the law, broadcasters must consider the family atmosphere in which many of their programs are viewed. There shall be no graphic portrayal of sexual acts by sight or sound. The portrayal of implied sexual acts must be essential to the plot and presented in a responsible and tasteful manner.

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A point here, a point there,

and a lot of bull in between.

Let's face it. The mainstream media in America has gotten a little wild and woolly when it comes to the truth. Hit and miss. Maybe even a little bit skewed one way or another. We think its high time to grab the truth by the horns and straighten things out.

The Washington Times
NATIONAL WEEKLY EDITION
March 22, 1998
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Official doesn't know lawyers' scandal role
Four-person office grew to 34 since '92

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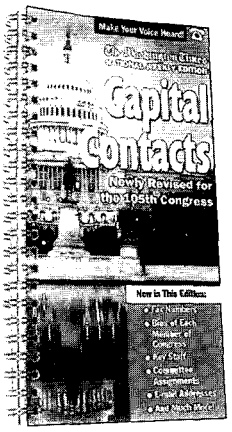

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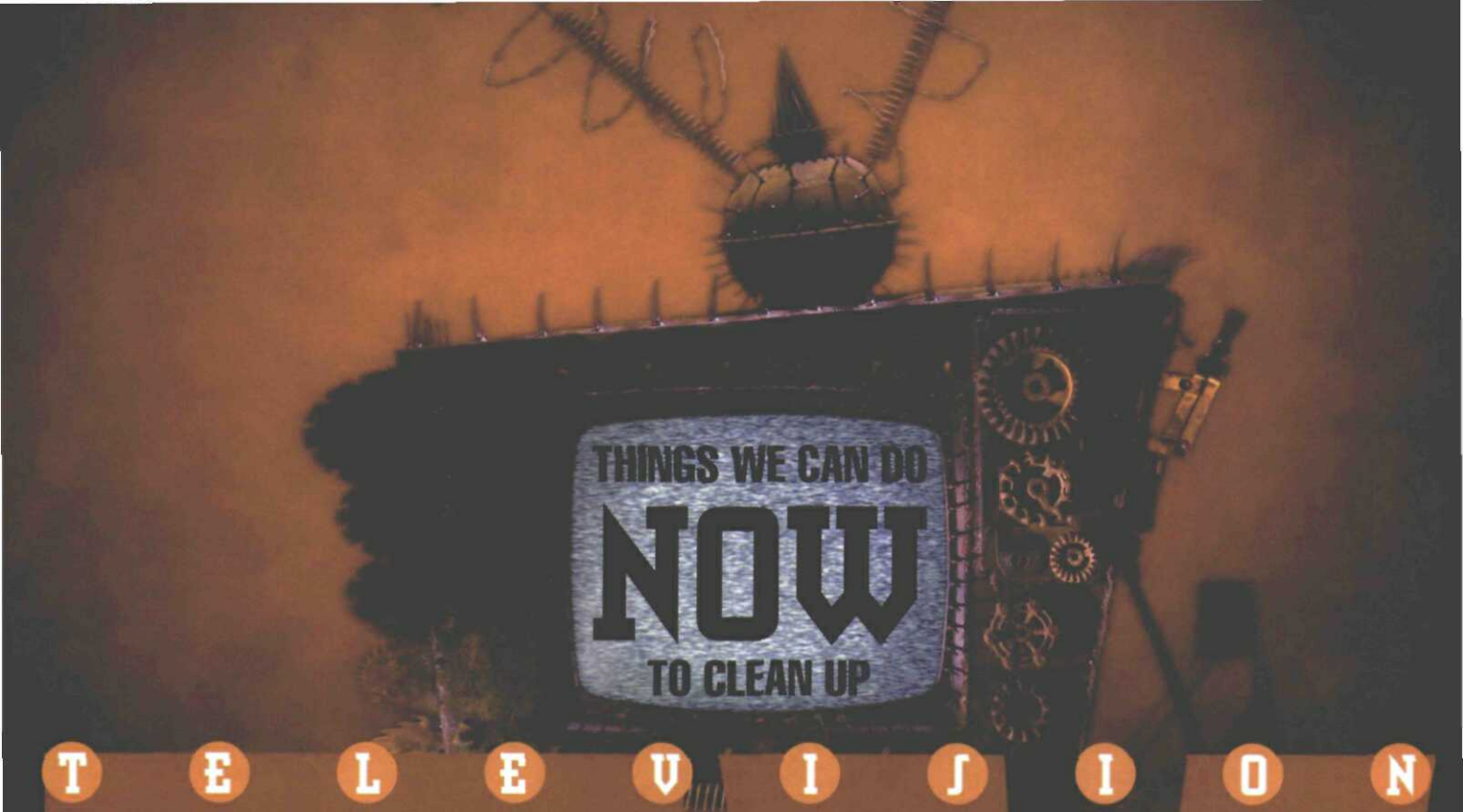

TELEVISION

In December, *The American Enterprise* and the Center for Media & Public Affairs held a live conference in Washington, D.C., on the state of TV programming today. After screening a documentary video of clips from current shows (summarized in print on pages 24-31), we invited eight experts—academics, a community organizer, a showbiz entertainer, two business executives, a teacher, and a doctor—to describe some practical, constructive measures that could be undertaken right away to improve the quality and decency of TV fare. Following are lightly edited versions of their presentations.

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Organize Parents Over the Internet

Robert Lichter

© Tony Stone Images

I'm a researcher who's tired of documenting the problems of TV violence and sleaze and wants to start doing something about it. The first congressional hearings on TV violence took place over 30 years ago. There's been a scholarly consensus on its harms for at least 15 years, and we're only now, in the past couple of years, beginning to see concrete action aimed at changing things.

The most systematic solution would be government censorship, but even those who incline toward this approach should resist the temptation on pragmatic grounds. Calls for censorship would split the public consensus that is essential to building a coalition for change. Parents of all ideological stripes agree that the popular culture is out of control, but they disagree as to which excesses should be reigned in, and they disagree mightily over letting government take the reins. Moreover, calls for censorship would allow the sleazemongers to grab the high ground of free speech. Any strategy that allows Jerry Springer to play First Amendment martyr is self-defeating. Instead, TV's critics need to work to see that the media marketplace better reflects the desires of consumers.

In particular, we should concentrate on using the Internet as a new medium for expressing public dissatisfaction. It is essential to inform and organize viewers so they can more effectively express the widespread discontent that now exists.

We now have a technological device built into all new TVs, the so-called V-chip, that will allow parents to block programming without eliminating the free speech right of Hollywood producers to produce it. We now have rating systems that give parents information on whether a particular program will contain certain kinds of offensive content. V-chips and ratings are evolving tools, not simple solutions. But properly used they can change the economic incentives that have led to today's televised sludge.

If we can inform parents in a timely and accurate fashion about the kinds of programming they're receiving, it now becomes possible for parents to block out certain kinds of material, diminishing the universe of viewing households, which in turn diminishes the ad rates these programs can earn. Even marginal audience reductions can lower the incentives to produce sludge. Although sex-and-sadism programming will still retain a niche audience, it will be deprived of the incremental and inadvertent audiences—particularly young persons—who come upon it by chance and then develop a taste for it. The goal is not to eliminate such programming but to marginalize it. It is unrealistic to think the Jerry Springers of the world will disappear from popular entertainment, but we can prevent them from setting the tone for the wider programming.

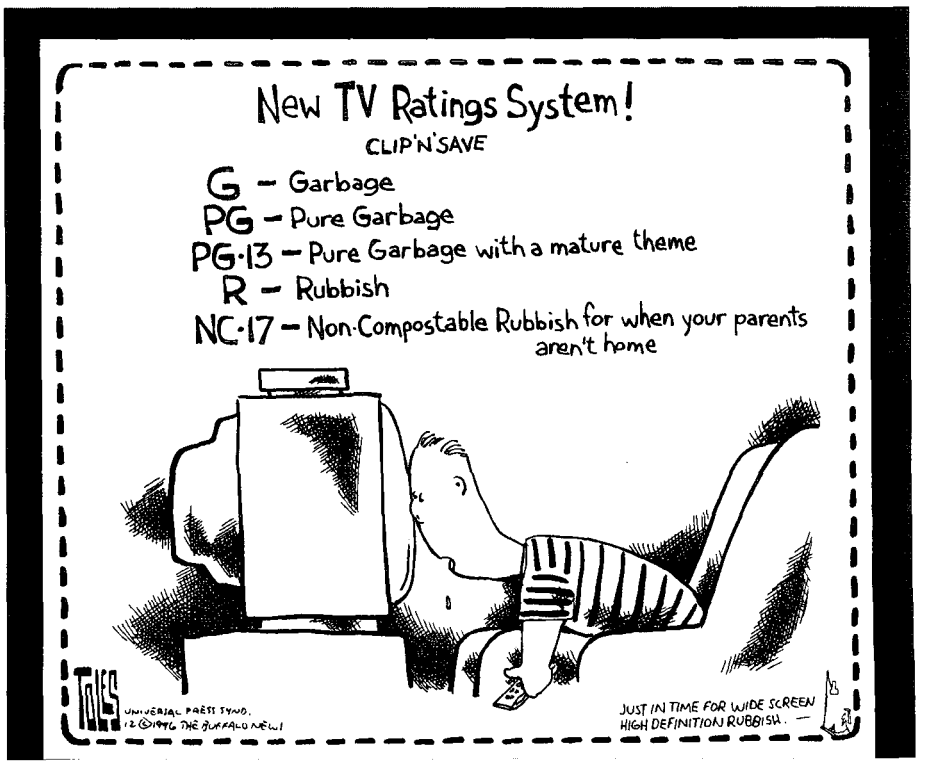
But this strategy requires a continuous flow of easy-to-apply consumer information. We therefore need to continue content analyses of various shows. We know that content-based ratings had to be forced on the TV producers, and studies show that the initial ratings are often highly inaccurate. Ratings integrity needs to be improved. The Center for Media and Public Affairs which I head is going to be conducting annual studies of television sex, language, and violence to assist in this.

But then this information needs to be disseminated as widely as possible. Concerned groups need to coordinate activities and get intelligence on objectionable programs out nationally. I would like to see parents able to go to a Web site where they could quickly and easily download all the information necessary to program their V-chips to keep garbage out of their households for the upcoming month or two.

Precisely what kind of material the V-chip blocks will vary according to the way the chip is programmed. It does not automatically block all violence, all sex, all bad language. But the technology does allow consumers to eliminate objectionable material with precision if they choose.

So the V-chip is a powerful tool—provided that it is supported with the necessary content information. We need to use the Internet not only to help people activate their V-chips, but also to encourage instant interactive responses from viewers to the producers, distributors, and advertisers of these programs.

We're just beginning to see how the Internet can mobilize large groups of people who happen to agree on one par-



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ticular cause. The change we seek in TV content isn't going to happen over night. For one thing, 1999 is the very first year that all new televisions will have V-chips. So what I'm proposing is a solution for the near future, not for today.

Robert Lichter is president of the Center for Media and Public Affairs.

Have the TV Industry Police Itself

Steve Allen

I can recall a specific moment from a few years ago when I discovered how angry many citizens are about sleazy TV. I was addressing an audience of about 900 well-to-do club women in the upscale city of La Jolla, California. One woman asked, "Mr. Allen, what can we do about the daily barrage of sadistic violence in television and films?"

Since I was there to entertain rather than inform, I replied, "Well, I happen to share the sentiments that motivated you to raise this question, so I would say that any producer, director, writer, stuntman, or actor who deliberately crammed objectionable violence into a production—should be taken out and beaten to a pulp."

I thought this would amuse the crowd. I was shocked to discover instead that those 900 club women gave me an uproarious semi-standing ovation. About 12 of them laughed; the rest wanted to run me for President.

What can be done? I think most people would agree we don't want formal, capital-*G* Government censorship. I would hope that self-policing can work. Certainly that is the right first step.

There is a precedent for the entertainment industry's attempting to police itself, and that is the Hays Production Code which governed films made by members of the Motion Picture Association of America in the 1930s, '40s, and '50s.

Some of the specific Thou Shalts and Thou Shalt Nots now have a peculiar sound. The most famous was the requirement that any couple in bed in a film, even if it were clear they were husband and wife, had to have at least one foot on the floor if any kind of affection was to be shown. Other elements on the list of 11 "don'ts" and 25 "be carefuls" included taboos against "licentious nudity," traffic in illegal drugs, and ridiculing the clergy. Producers were warned to be careful about depictions of bloodiness, "lustful kissing," "the deliberate seduction of girls," and extremely violent destruction of buildings, vehicles, etc.

One thing that seems never to have been controversial was the insistence that films make it clear crime does not pay—which meant that all evildoers must be punished in one way or another. That is by no means the case today, as we have been instructed this morning by the video "Wasteland."

A major reason the self-policing system worked was the fact that all the big studios who made up the Motion Picture Association also owned nearly all the first-run theaters in the country. But in 1949, a few owners of independent theaters went to the Justice Department to protest this apparent monopoly, and the Justice Department agreed to file an antitrust suit against the studios. In 1950, the Supreme Court decided in favor of the Justice Department, and the major studios were forced to sell their

It Isn't Only Children Who Can Be Harmed

Today's TV and film-rating system have been likened to the warning on cigarette packages, but the analogy is faulty. The latter tells us that cigarettes are bad for children and bad for adults. The former tells us that sex and violence are bad for children but okay for adults, perhaps even good for adults, something children can look forward to when they are "grown up," as we say.

In this situation, a dialogue between a father and his teenage son would be likely to go something like this:

Father: "Your mother and I are going off for the weekend, and we don't want you watching any X-rated videos while we're away."
Son: "Why not? You and Mom do."
Father: "Well, yes, but they're for adults only. Look at the label."
Son: "But if they're okay for you and Mom, why can't me and my girlfriend watch them?"
Father: "Well...well, because I said so, that's why."
Son (but *sotto voce*)**:** "Up yours."

Farfetched? Perhaps. But why should our teenage son have to wait until he is an adult? Unlike his father, he may not yet be capable of earning a living or caring for a family, but, like his father, he is perfectly capable of enjoying an X-rated film. The only reason to deprive him of this pleasure is that, by doing so, he might be prevented from becoming like his father, and this might be done only by declaring that obscenity and pornography (like cigarettes) are bad for father and son alike. This is why the censors preferred the Motion Picture Production Code to a rating system.

According to the Code—I'm quoting the 1956 revision—"no picture shall be produced which will lower the moral standards of those who see it." Its specific provisions included the following (and how quaint they seem today!):

Excessive and inhumane acts of cruelty and brutality shall not be presented. This includes all detailed and protracted presentations of physical violence, torture, and abuse.... The sanctity of the institution of marriage and the home shall be upheld. No film shall infer that casual or promiscuous sex relationships are the accepted or common thing.... Lustful...kissing and embraces, suggestive postures and gestures are not to be shown.... Complete nudity, in fact or in silhouette, is never permitted, nor shall there be any licentious notice by characters in the film of suggested nudity.

The prohibitions of the 1950s (and before) have become the standard fare of the 1990s.

—Adapted from an essay by American Enterprise Institute fellow Walter Berns in the Spring 1995 issue of The Public Interest.

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theaters. And the result, foreseen or not, was that the Hays Code lost much of its authority, though it continued to sputter along until 1965. In 1968 Jack Valenti, the present head of the Motion Picture Association, officially abolished the Hays Code and substituted the age-based movie rating system we have now.

I have little sympathy when today's producers whine that the strict old rules would inhibit good art. For some of the greatest pictures ever made were created under that voluntary Production Code. *Casablanca,* for example, and *The Maltese Falcon, Mutiny on the Bounty,* and many more.

In fact, *Washington Post* entertainment critic Rita Kempley has argued that while the old Hays Code may now sound "quaint," it "just might have been the midwife of Hollywood's Golden Age." That's because the constraints "forced writers, directors, and performers to tax their skills and to use their imaginations. Filmmakers evoked everything from sheer terror to sexual longing—in some cases unforgettably—without resorting to excesses of profanity, flesh, blood, or grandiose effects."

Today's unbridled freedom of expression has "only limited the moviemakers' vocabulary," argues Kempley. "The more they show, the less they create." Sex and violence are resorted to heavy handedly as a "simplistic way to manipulate audiences."

Kempley notes that the architects of the Hays Production Code expressed concern over "the effect a too-detailed description of these may have upon the moron." Today, she warns, the morons are at the gate.

But it's not too late. With a little common sense, decency, and forbearance, America's entertainment producers can revive a voluntary code of conduct that would eliminate the anti-social elements of today's programming, without cramping their art.

The whole country would thank them.

Steve Allen, the creator and first host of "The Tonight Show," is currently campaigning to improve the quality of TV programming in collaboration with the Parents' Television Council.

Advertisers Must Play a Stronger Role

Robert Stuart

My task is to speak from the businessman's point of view. When I was the honcho of Quaker Oats from the late '60s through the '70s, we began to realize that television clearly was the best way to sell our products.

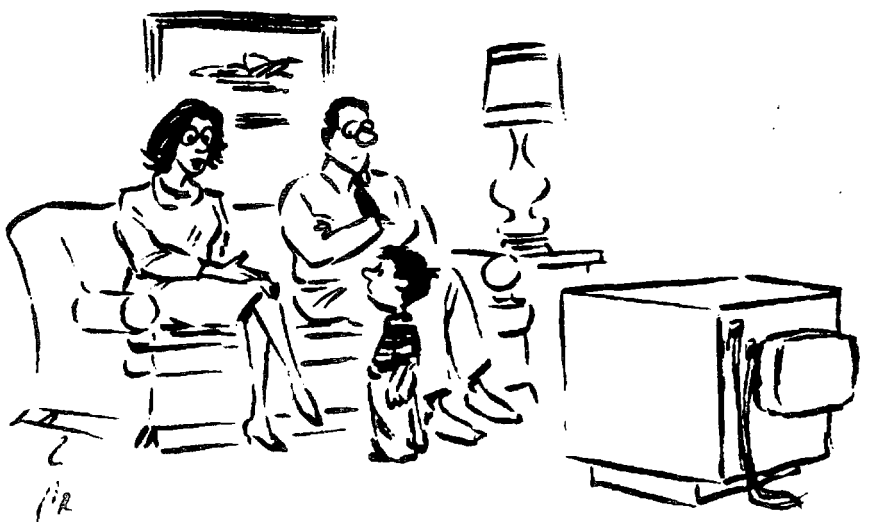
Some of us also began to recognize, and worry about, what effect TV programming has on behavior, particularly of children. Quaker Oats had Fisher-Price in those days, and we advertised a great deal to children. We tried to be good guys, adapting a code of conduct which wasn't enforced perfectly but set guidelines on what sort programs we would and would not support. We tried to avoid being too goody-goody, but we were aware of the consequences of this very powerful medium.

Why haven't more advertisers done something? For several reasons. First, most CEOs don't have time to watch much television. They count on their subordinates to check what's going on. If the CEOs do watch some television, they're probably watching a bit of sports, but most nights their briefcases are bulging or they're involved in social events. So the executives of the world are not concentrating on this issue.

Some, for example John Pepper of Procter & Gamble, will be better about this. Some are better organized than others. I never had time to watch much TV. But occasionally I would spot one of our commercials on a somewhat dubious program and I'd ask a marketing employee, "What are we doing on that show?" He'd say, "Well, Bob, you've only given me 5 million bucks for this product. The company is judging me and my bonus on the profitability of this brand, and the advertising agencies say that that show gives me the greatest reach for the money."

So codes are there in businesses, but it's tough to stick to them. Businessmen somewhat understandably say, "In a world of competition, we can't afford to unilaterally disarm."

Still, it's worrying how much has changed in the last 30 years since I started worrying about this issue. It's an example of what Sen. Patrick Moynihan has called "defining deviancy down." The shocking footage in your video, "Wasteland," would stir up anybody concerned about our kids and the future of our society.



"Go to your room, Raymond, it's time for the evening news."

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Business and Violence Don't Mix

Violence on television might be harming an unintended victim: advertisers. According to new research, television viewers are less likely to remember a commercial message if they see it in the middle of a violence-ridden program than they are if the show isn't violent.

The finding challenges one of Madison Avenue's most widely held assumptions: that the most gripping television programming (read: violent) is always the most effective for advertisers. The study suggests that brutal "action" scenes make television viewers angry, interfering with their ability to take in a sales pitch.

Tests were run on three different ads chosen at random: one for Unilever's Wisk laundry detergent, one for Plax mouthwash, and a third for Krazy Glue. People who watched the commercials during violent programming had a harder time recalling the name of the product advertised than viewers who watched nonviolent programming containing the same ads. Moreover, people who watched ads during violent programs also remembered fewer details, and had a harder time picking out the brands later when shown a variety of similar products.

The ads were embedded in scenes from ten different films and shown to a group of 720 undergraduate students at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa. The study comes as television programmers are turning to ever more violent forms of programming to grab audiences. With the exception of Fox's so-called reality specials (sample titles: "When Good Pets Go Bad" and "World's Wildest Police Videos"), most violent programming has migrated to the cable networks.

—Adapted from a December 1, 1998 article by Sally Beatty in the Wall Street Journal.

I think the time may have come when businessmen will do more. The new Forum for Responsible Advertisers is one sign of this, and one I support.

I think it is possible to reach the large firms that are the major advertisers and persuade them of the negative effects of sponsoring unwholesome programs. Companies should, for instance, be shown the important study done recently at Iowa State, backed by the American Psychological Association. It demonstrated that people actually become so irritated and annoyed by violence on television today that they can't remember the product that sponsored the show. (See above box.)

Businessmen are always thinking of the bottom line, and if we could get this point through their coconuts, that in sponsoring way-out stuff they're losing customers as well as doing social harm, then that's a significant economic force which may dissuade advertisers from blindly accepting any type of programming offered them.

There is much evidence that what people see on television can have serious adverse consequences. I think everybody would prefer to do something about the problem on a voluntary basis. But I'm convinced Congress is so upset about this that unless programmers and advertisers regulate their own house as businesspeople, and pull back from the really outrageous shows, then we're headed for the legislative regulation most of us don't want.

Robert Stuart served for 15 years as CEO of Quaker Oats.

Boycott the Worst Shows

Michael Pfleger

In January 1998, Dr. King and I and a number of others in Chicago had a conversation about violence on TV. We'd been told, "Turn this stuff off if you don't like it." But we believed that until you unite the silent majority, they just sit back and don't take action.

So we agreed to observe the Jerry Springer show, which we believed to be one of the worst shows. After a number of weeks of watching, we decided to set up a meeting with the general manager at the NBC station that carried it in Chicago.

Advertisers are Organizing I

Last year, I helped found the Forum for Responsible Advertisers, along with a number of other corporate executives responsible for advertising who were concerned with the direction of TV programming.

We now call ourselves the Forum for Family-Friendly Programming, and our immediate goal is to bring back the family hour of programming from 8:00 to 9:00 P.M., so families can be comfortable watching television together.

The major advertisers taking a part in the Forum include Johnson & Johnson, Procter and Gamble, Sears Roebuck, Ford, Coca-Cola, and others. Together we buy billions of dollars' worth of television ads every year.

We are stressing that we would like more choices of programming. We would like to challenge our production partners in the television community and ask them to create programming with less sex and violence in it. We want to work with them to develop those kinds of shows.

We also believe individual advocacy is very important, and we encourage every one of our member corporations to work individually towards this goal, as well as with various groups.

We plan to reward successes. We are going to work jointly with the Association of National Advertisers, with the American Advertising Federation, with the Ad Council, and with the American Association of Advertising Agencies to recognize wholesome and family-friendly programming. We want to celebrate good television—because we want more of it.

—Andrea Alstrup, who is in charge of Johnson & Johnson's advertising, is a founder of the Forum for Family-Friendly Programming. She spoke extemporaneously from the conference audience.

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Advertisers are Organizing II

When the Advertising Council convened last week to honor John Pepper, Chairman-CEO of Procter & Gamble, Mr. Pepper took the podium to announce a plan for P&G to join with four leading advertising associations to present an annual award to marketers, networks, studios, and agencies that help develop and broadcast family programming. The move marks the second time this year that megamarketer P&G has used its clout to initiate industrywide change....

Other marketers seem willing to join P&G. IBM CEO Louis Gerstner was one of the first to catch up with Mr. Pepper after his speech. Big Blue's chief congratulated his colleague and told him IBM would endorse such an award.

—excerpted from
Advertising Age,
November 23, 1998

We brought him our concerns: How every single show has people handling disagreements by picking up chairs, by fighting or shoving, which says to an audience day in and day out that violence is normal and acceptable behavior. In the same way, the show helps to make the degrading of women acceptable. But violence and degradation are *not* acceptable behavior in this country.

We told the NBC general manager that we had decided to fight. We demanded that the show change. We didn't say, "You've got to take Jerry Springer off the air." We said we're not going to tolerate the show as it has now defined itself—violent, degrading, obscene, and pornographic.

After a number of meetings with the general manager, we then met with the executive producer of the show; Jerry Springer would never meet with us himself. The executive producer made it very clear to us that, yes, violence had become a trademark of the show, that's what was selling it, that's what the audience wanted, and they had no intention of stopping it. He added that young people are the target audience and that the show would continue to target them.

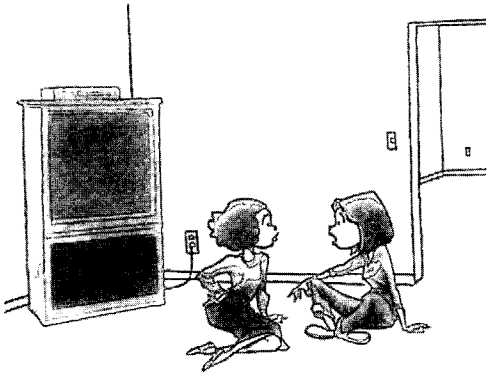
Around this time, Jerry Springer declared, "This is just entertainment." But we said, "No, this is real-life tragedy being exploited as other people's entertainment."

At the same time we were meeting with the NBC station we were building a coalition. We joined groups such as the National Council of Churches; National Conference of Christians and Jews; Community Renewal Society; the Nation of Islam; the Southern Christian Leadership Conference with Martin Luther King, III; the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition and Reverend Jesse Jackson. We also had 300 churches, synagogues, and mosques in Chicago join us in a boycott.

When we had a strong enough national and local base, we called for a boycott of the NBC station broadcasting Jerry Springer in Chicago. We kicked it off April 12, Easter Sunday—the number-one time of attendance in churches—and in many places clergy spoke on the topic from pulpits. The coverage and response were tremendous.

To build momentum for the boycott, we then scheduled a rally at the NBC Towers in Chicago. The day before the rally was to take place we received word that the NBC station had decided to stop airing the show in Chicago. The night before the rally we received word the local Fox station had picked up the show when NBC dropped it.

The next morning approximately 400 people had gathered at NBC at noon, so we went ahead with the rally, with national and local press coverage, and thanked NBC for dropping the show out of respect for the community. Then we marched to the Fox station and named them as the new target. Fox in Chicago was particularly keen to boost their evening newscast, which had low ratings. So we boycotted the local Fox news, saying that what NBC had thrown out in their trash Fox had picked up, in an insult to the people of Chicago.



"We can only afford the bare necessities."

At the same time, we went after local sponsors. We convinced nine of the ten local advertisers to stop sponsoring the show. Then we set up a meeting with the Fox station's general manager, who in turn set up a meeting for us with the owners of the Jerry Springer show, Studios USA in Los Angeles. The company's then-president, its vice president, and a number of other people from Studios USA met with us at the Fox studios in Chicago.

The day of the meeting we had protesters outside to gain news coverage for the meeting, and we included in our meeting representatives from some of the national groups in our alliance, so the Springer people could see the national base we had gained.

After an almost three-hour meeting, Studios USA agreed to end all violence on the show. Although this was just one of our four problems with the show, we knew it was the number-one thing drawing viewers. If the violence were ended, it would force them to redefine the Jerry Springer show.

We were very pleased, the meeting ended, and the boycott was called off. After one month of editing out the violence, the result was just what the Studios USA president had predicted in our meeting: a loss of 25 to 30 percent of the audience. When he made his prediction the president said they would be forced to come up with a new format for the show, but he assured us they would.

After one month of seeing the ratings drop and the ad revenues go down, they decided to go back to violence on the show. We immediately called them and tried to set up meetings. They would not return our calls. We set up another meeting with the general manager of Fox in Chicago, and she agreed to edit the violence out herself. And still today, in December 1998, the local Fox affiliate edits

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the show and Chicago sees a different Jerry Springer from the rest of the country. The violence is deleted and the show goes to audience shots instead. We told her if the editing did not continue, we would go back to boycotting Fox locally.

We then set up a boycott march at Studios USA in Los Angeles. Working with groups and churches there, we had a rally and informed the public that Studios USA had broken their word and that we would continue to boycott the show, beginning with the nationally syndicated sponsors. We got a list of the sponsors and put the names of the top 19 on flyers around the country. Thus far, seven of the top 19 have stopped sponsoring the show, with three more agreeing to pull out in early 1999.

We have also asked the Chicago police to look into violations of the Indecency Act, because the local studio audience is shown nudity during the taping every week. We've also filed complaints with the Federal Communications Commission, asking that the station's license be revoked because of the nudity.

So we are going to continue to go after the Jerry Springer show. We believe that unless we zero in on the worst out there and aggressively make clear that this is not something we can tolerate, then Jerry Springer is going to open the door for worse things to happen in broadcasting, not only in Chicago but around the country.

The Reverend Michael Pfleger of St. Sabina Catholic Church has ministered in the African-American community on the South Side of Chicago for over 30 years.

Use Economic Incentives to Clean Up TV

James Hamilton

Television executives often claim TV is violent because it's a mirror of society, or because violence is necessary to tell particular stories. But the real drive is a simple desire to gain a profitable audience. All of those disturbing images in the video *Wasteland* were consciously

crafted to attract a particular demographic group.

My research shows patterns that link violence with specific viewers:

• During the "sweeps" period, when ratings are measured in local TV markets across the country, all networks are more likely to air violent movies. During the sweeps interval I studied, for instance, the Fox network increased its proportion of violent movies from 42 percent to 84 percent.

• When ABC programmed "Monday Night Football," the basic cable channel TBS showed violent movies 65 percent of the time. When the football season was over and males were no longer concentrated at the ABC dial, TBS raised its use of violent movies during that time slot to 92 percent.

• HBO had a policy known internally as Testosterone Thursday. On Thursday night at 9:00 P.M., when NBC was showing "Seinfeld," HBO would air violent, low-quality movies.

Why do programmers push this violent content? To attract, first of all, males 18 to 34, and second, females 18 to 34. Those groups are attracted to violent fare, and they are particularly prized by advertisers because their buying decisions can still be influenced by advertising. (If you're 60, you probably know what toothpaste you're going to use; if you're 20, that decision may still be up for grabs.)

Unfortunately, a show that reaches 18- to 34-year-olds usually also reaches children. When ABC shows a violent movie on Sunday night at 9:00 P.M., an average of 1.6 million kids under 12 watch. And research shows clearly that TV violence stimulates aggression in some children, as well as increasing their fears and desensitizing them to violence in general.

Neither advertisers nor programmers are led by the market to consider the full costs to society of using violence to attract viewers. Which means the exposure of children to violent programs is similar to a pollution problem. Just as a factory may not consider the harm of what comes out of a smokestack, so programmers and advertisers may not incorporate into their decisions the cost to society of the exposure of children to this type of programming.

What do we do with air pollution? We have liability laws, we have zoning, we have direct content regulation. But in the media realm the First Amendment restricts attempts to influence content. A better way to deal with TV violence is by providing consumer information. As it stands now, parents face relatively high costs in monitoring time and so forth if they want to prevent their children from being exposed to objectionable programming.

The V-chip and embedded program ratings, however, could become a hardware/software combination that makes it much easier for parents to be more responsible. But the V-chip and ratings will only work if parents find the system credible, informative, and effective. That will require substantial assistance from people outside the television industry, including interest groups, doctors, and teachers.

Interest groups and researchers need to counter the arguments of television executives who downplay the problem. Nearly all investigators agree that watching violent television harms some children. Parents know this, too, and when provided with information about program content, parents act. My research shows that just putting a parental-discretion warning on a movie causes the audience of children to decline by 13 percent. Interest groups need to help parents in these ways:

• *Describe the harms of current programs.* Researchers should continue to monitor the content and effects of programs.

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• *Monitor the accuracy of industry ratings.* A recent study for the Kaiser Family Foundation found that most programs with sex, violence, or adult language did not receive the content warnings promised in the industry's rating system. For example, over 90 percent of shows that contained adult language didn't receive a language indicator (L). Similarly, 79 percent of violent programs did not carry a V.

• *Encourage research on how parents use the ratings.* Broadcast executives will have little to gain from research on how parents use V-chips as they become standard equipment on TV sets. It will be up to others to monitor how the system is used, and to inform parents about the potential benefits of blocking objectionable content.

Two groups of professionals can help. Physicians could offer parents a short information sheet on the effects of television and the advantages of shielding their children from the worst programming—perhaps during inoculation visits, which are a similar attempt to maintain public health through prevention. Teachers could also reinforce efforts to combat television's harms.

There is another way that better labeling of programming provides financial incentives to broadcasters to clean up their act. When a movie carries parental-discretion warnings, particular types of advertisers are noticeably less willing to support it: Companies with products targeted to women, older consumers, and families with children, for fear of consumer backlash and damage to their brand names.

The expansion of viewing options and technologies that lies ahead will create an even greater need for program information to guide parental choices. The financial incentives involved will make groups outside the industry all the more important in keeping parents well-informed about how to protect their children from television's more harmful effects.

James Hamilton directs Duke University's Program on Violence in the Media.

Questions & Answers

Audience QUESTION: Of all the projects to control the bad effects of television, the most effective seem to have been those going straight for the throat with boycotts and other protests.

MR. WALSH: Boycotts can be an effective tool, but they are hard to sustain, as Father Pfleger's story shows. I was in Chicago a month ago, and there's still violence on Jerry Springer in Chicago, at least the Jerry Springer I saw in Chicago. I don't say that to criticize the boycott, which I fully support. But the television industry plays cat and mouse. They say, O.K., we'll take the offensiveness down a notch. Then as soon as people's anger fades, the bad material returns, because the industry knows it's difficult to sustain boycotts over time.

MR. STUART: Let me add something from a businessman's point of view. If the advertisers would recognize the problem, pull back on ad budgets, and focus clearly on higher standards, that could be a real long-term help, and it could be done on a voluntary basis.

MR. ALLEN: I have a question to the other panelists. The Fox network has come up a lot today. What about approaching Fox owner Rupert Murdoch directly about some of the dreadful things some of his workers are doing? Mr. Murdoch is proud and articulate on his standing as a conservative. So the obvious question is, why does Fox violate his conservative standards daily?

MR. LICHTER: We've long known that people are capable of putting their personal convictions aside when there's a question of profit. With the Fox network, Mr. Murdoch made a brilliant business decision. People didn't think another network could succeed, but he found an underserved market of young people who wanted raunchier, more violent entertainment, and he catered to that market.

Currently, the same thing is happening with another fledgling network, Warner Brothers, which features "Dawson's Creek" and other risqué shows tailored to a young audience. These networks are simply making business decisions to go after a certain niche, and I think we have to take for granted that the executives deciding to run these shows often don't watch the shows or care what's on them, and simply rationalize their actions.

MR. WALSH: By the way, it was announced yesterday afternoon that the programming chief behind the Warner Brothers strategy was just hired as the programming director of NBC.

MR. LICHTER: One further point. A lot of national advertisers have backed out of the Jerry Springer show as a result of Father Pfleger's efforts. That means the show is now supported by personal injury lawyers, astrology ads, other unsavory sponsors. The show is still on the air, but it is more marginal in terms of the culture. I think this has blocked an even further descent into deviancy.

We have to look for systematic solutions that will minimize the ratings these kinds of shows earn, so as to make them less attractive to advertisers. In our capitalist society, there will always be people who are personally conservative and religious but who manage to find reasons for making money off this kind of material, not just Rupert Murdoch.

SEN. SAM BROWNBACK: I've actually had this conversation with Mr. Murdoch. He acknowledged the problem but didn't acknowledge the need for action at that time. I think it's something that needs to be raised with him personally by various people. This is appropriate because, as stated, he is ultimately responsible for this, and that burden is upon him and his soul.

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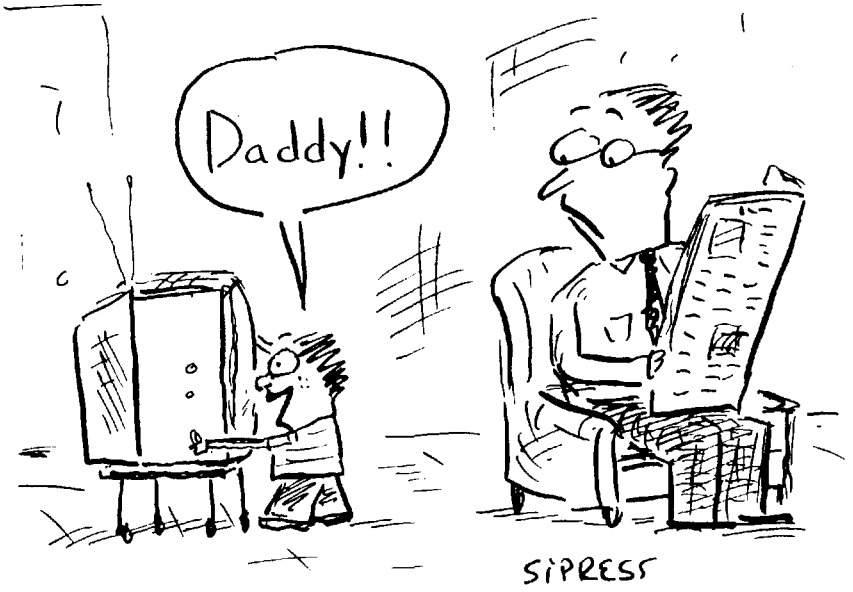
Have Physicians Educate Parents

David Walsh



As a psychologist, I learned decades ago that the best way to get someone's attention is to deliver an emotional jolt. TV programmers have learned this too, and in their drive for ratings they now often race to see how many Jolts Per Show (JPS) they can deliver to get people's attention.

Now they have to keep increasing the JPS factor for three reasons. First, desensitization: More families now have televisions than have telephones or flush toilets, and the sets are on for a huge chunk of the day. Whenever we are exposed to a certain level of stimulation over and over, we become accustomed to it. So to cause the same response, the JPS factor must be increased.

Second, TV is experiencing increased competition. A generation ago, there were three or four channels per market. Now with cable there are dozens. With satellite TV, there are over a hundred channels, and in the new digital television era, there will be the capacity for several hundred, all battling for our eyeballs.

The third reason for the increasing JPS factor involves evolving technology. The invention of the remote control 15 years ago meant that a viewer doesn't even have to get up and walk three feet to change the channel. As soon as the jolts stop, all he needs is a thumb. As viewing technologies converge, it will be just as easy to switch throughout a world of cyberspace entertainment.

As TV has become more and more jolting, the health care community has become increasingly concerned. The American Psychological Association, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychology, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Medical Association all joined to support TV ratings, gathering for the first time in one room two years ago to coordinate a response.

The American Academy of Pediatrics now recommends that every pediatrician talk to parents about children's TV viewing habits. The American Medical Association recommends that every primary care physician—family practice doctors, internists, and pediatricians—do the same thing. Media health histories can be included in child checkups.

A "Physician's Guide" published by the American Medical Association includes these suggestions:

- Turn off the television during meals.
- Avoid using television and other forms of media as babysitters.
- Take the televisions out of kids' bedrooms.
- Practice "appointment TV." Decide in advance what's worth watching rather than just turning it on to "see if there is anything on."
- Consider rearranging the furniture so the TV is not the focal point of the house. Families watch less television if the sets are not literally at the center of their lives.
- Limit the use of television. For children, it should be no more than one to two hours a day.
- Set some ground rules. Examples might include things like no television before school, during daytime hours, or before homework is done.
- Be clear and consistent about the kinds of programs that are out of bounds.
- Use the ratings in making choices and use the V-chip when it becomes available.

A lot of education remains to be done, for while parents are aware that television influences children, parental behavior doesn't yet reflect that awareness. For example, the Nielsen ratings for the second week in October revealed that the highest-rated program for the age group 2 to 5 was the risqué young-adult sitcom "Friends."

No three-year-old gets up from the supper table saying, "Mom, can I watch 'Friends'?" The only way that statistic makes sense is that "Friends" is phenomenally popular with young adults, many of whom have young children. It's aired in an early prime time slot. And the kids are along for the ride.

The health care industry has real concern that last year's victory in winning a TV ratings system may have been hollow. At the National Institute on Media and the Family we've had parents view and then rate programs, particularly in the PG and TV-14 category, and we found that if parents had been deciding the ratings instead of the networks, the ratings would have been quite different. Parents agreed with the networks' TV-14 ratings in only 48 percent of the cases, for instance. They would have given many of those programs the adult "M" rating. We've found that parents do not trust the ratings and are not using them as much as had been hoped, largely because they find them too lenient.

The V-chip will only work as well as the embedded ratings allow it to. If parents don't trust the ratings and thus don't use the V-chip, it has done no good. Or if they end up trusting too-

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lenient ratings, their kids will continue to see inappropriate material even if they do use the V-chip.

Another problem with the present ratings agreement is fatigue. Our research about parents' evaluation of the ratings, for instance, received little press coverage because, we were told, people are tired of the issue.

The health care community needs to keep pushing the boundaries of TV research, and one area where research will be powerful is in brain imaging techniques that will let us begin to identify and track how these powerful stimuli affect brain functioning. That should open up a new level of awareness of the power of TV, and we are now seeking funding for one of the first series of studies using brain imaging.

It's important to realize that television is a moving target. The television we are describing today is not going to be the television watched five to ten years from now, when children will be able to sit on a couch and with a handheld device move from television to World Wide Web, to video game, to movie on demand.

If the professionals charged with guarding America's health are going to keep up with these changes, they will have to move with speed and seriousness.

Psychologist David Walsh is president of the National Institute on Media and the Family.

Swap Virtual Lives for Real Ones

John Taylor Gatto

Robert Stuart commented earlier that he wasn't able to watch much television because he was too involved in real-life events. That's my ideal. I confess I find TV such a corrupting phenomenon that I believe the best solution to combat the damage it causes would be to do away with it entirely. But I'm aware the chances that will happen any time soon are zero. So as a schoolteacher I found myself searching for ways to help people voluntarily cut back on the time they spend staring at the lighted box.

It wasn't until I became a teacher that I began to be driven crazy by TV. I soon discovered I could tell which kids were heavy TV watchers. They showed signs of being radically incomplete as human beings, as if their growth had been artificially retarded.

TV-addicted kids were irresponsible and needed constant admonition and policing. They were malicious to each other and sunk in chronic boredom much of the time. They whined a lot, ratted on each other constantly, and seemed unusually dishonest.

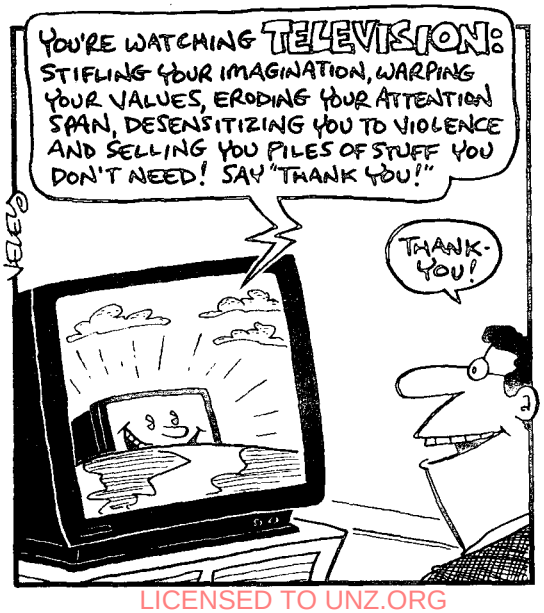
Above all they lacked any sustaining purpose. It was as if they consumed too many of other people's stories to write their own stories.

I knew I couldn't long tolerate being a teacher of such dwarf spirits, so I decided to try to help these kids—mainly for my own selfish peace of mind and only incidentally for any altruistic motive. But help them how? I had a strong hunch the problems weren't coming primarily from the degraded images and stories they were consuming, but *from the fatal arithmetic of subtracting real experience from young lives and replacing it with imitation experience.*

I decided to see if relief could be had by replacing the old school curriculum of low-level abstractions with a heavy-duty action curriculum of intellectual rigor and real-world experience.

If kids could be shocked into face-to-face engagement with reality, they might voluntarily stop consuming the ready-packaged lifestyles of television that don't require mental curiosity and exploration. I gambled that I could lead kids to a life more interesting than that of a spectator, that I could trick them into becoming players.

Discretion won't allow me to tell you how many laws I had to break to establish this new order, but from the first it delivered the goods. Plunging kids into the heady waters of life and keeping them there long enough to make them recognize how much of their power



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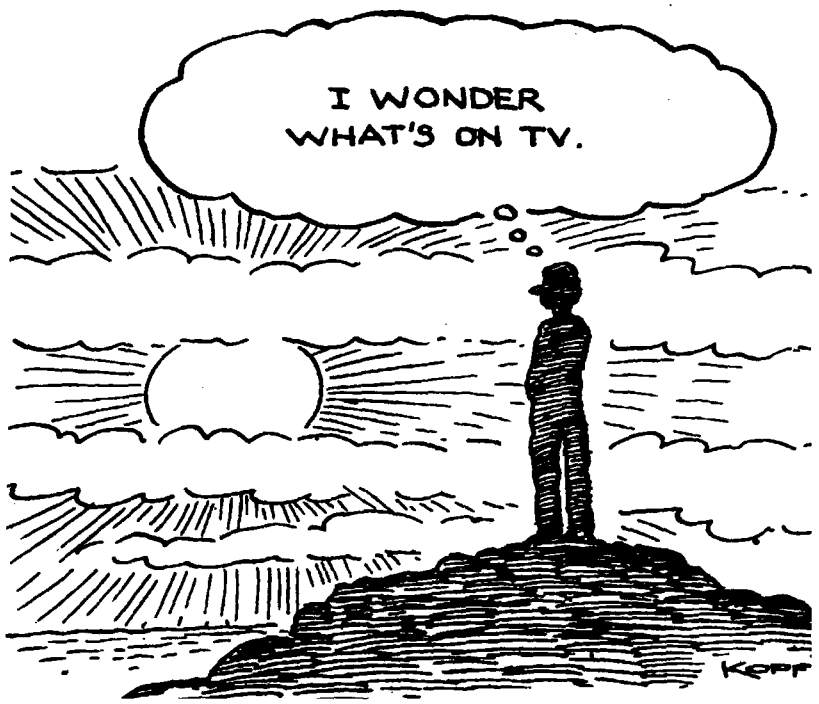

was being squandered caused a dramatic diminution in their dependence on the electronic doll house.

Inspired by the still-used medieval pilgrim road across northern Spain called the Camino de Santiago, I thought local pilgrimages could work for my kids. So by ones and twos, always acting in a conspiracy with the kids' parents (who were as desperate as I was), I sent 13-year-olds through the five boroughs of New York City, on foot and alone. Some walked the circumference of Manhattan, a distance of about 28 miles. Some walked through different zip code zones, constructing profiles of the people who lived there from various clues of dress, speech, architecture, interviews, library research, and from looking in shop windows. Other kids mapped Central Park, or great universities, businesses, museums. They invaded government departments or courts, describing and analyzing what they saw. I had a standing offer that anybody could get a day or two or three away from school to make discoveries anywhere in the city—as long as she or he were willing to walk alone.

In class, I taught the kids how to process statistical and narrative data, and how to challenge it. In this way my eighth-grade classes were able to predict that a politician named Dinkins would win the New York mayor's race, even though the *New York Times* pronounced him a 17-point underdog. The difference was the *Times* had sampled 400 respondents, and we had sampled 3,280.

Another inspiration that helped me construct a curriculum to combat the passive mindlessness of television was a wonderfully weird guidebook called *A Visitor's Key to Iceland.* This peculiar book follows every road in Iceland step by step and makes dead facts come to vigorous life: Two chests of silver are believed hidden in this hill, here a collapsing bridge allowed a murderer to escape! In this hot spring a famous outlaw boiled his meat. This farm refused a pregnant woman shelter and its owners were buried alive in a landslide that very night.

This is history at its best. My kids produced visitor's keys to the top pizza parlors of the West Side, to the architecture of brownstones, to the swimming pools of New York. We did visitor's keys to the hidden knowledge of old men and women who sat on the park benches of Riverside Park. It took neither talent nor money to set this creative energy in motion, but once it was running the radiant energy of TV had a hard time keeping up.

I encouraged children to start little businesses on school time or to trade their labor for valuable training as Ben Franklin had done. Over the years we launched so many useful projects and did so much valuable independent study that my kids won an abundance of opportunities and prizes. But most of all they gained self-confidence and purposes of their own.

Lecturing about the evils of TV probably wouldn't have done any good at all. But making life more interesting than its pale video shadow succeeded splendidly. Moral and behavioral cripples turned into exciting and interesting young people. The biggest surprise was how easy this was to accomplish.

Inner clocks tick in all of us, warning that we have appointments to keep with reality—real work to do, real people to meet, real fights to fight, real adventures to experience, real risks to take, real things to learn. For the past 50 years a variety of influences—television and government schooling principal among them—have conspired to break the natural need of children to be out and about.

Since the advent of TV, growing up is something that never happens to many of us, because too much of our precious trial-and-error time is wasted in a sitting position in the dark. Being mature means living with purpose, welcoming responsibility, acting as a citizen, building strengths, wrestling with weaknesses, and developing the heart, the mind, and the spirit. None of this can be done as a spectator.

Television reduces children's attention to quick takes. It creates a craving for continual stimulation which in reality cannot be satisfied. But deep as we seem to be mired in this stupid addiction, ending it is as simple as pulling the plug.

Making life more interesting than its television substitute is how you get kids to do that for themselves. Jump-start a TV-addicted kid and nature will do the rest.

John Taylor Gatto earned New York City or New York State Teacher of the Year awards five times. He serves on the board of directors of TV-Free America, sponsor of the annual "Turn Off TV Week."

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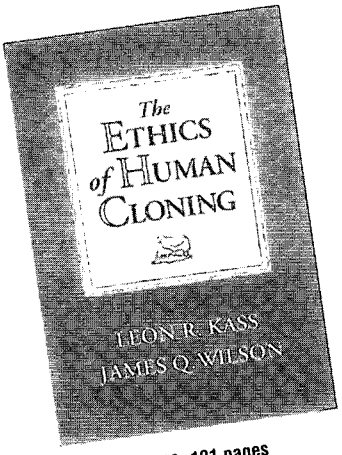

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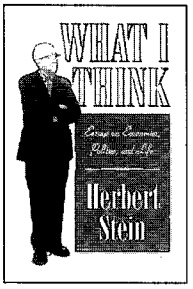

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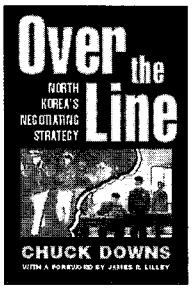

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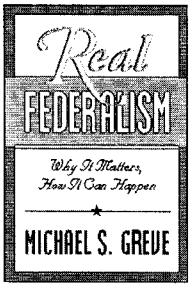

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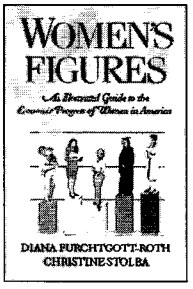

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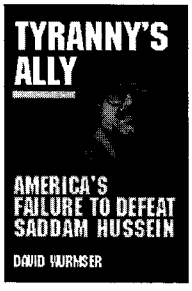

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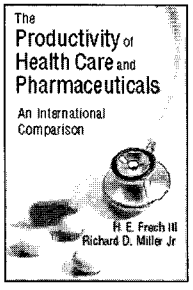

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IS THE PROBLEM

TELEVISION

OR

A DEBATE BETWEEN

MICHAEL MEDVED & DAVID HOROWITZ

To interject some healthy dissent into the live conference on which this issue of TAE is based, we invited two distinguished conservatives and authorities on popular entertainment who have sharply different views of TV—Michael Medved and David Horowitz—to debate the state of our airwaves. Medved suggests that today's TV is fundamentally corrosive, and urges consumers to be extremely discriminating. Horowitz argues TV has never been better, and that it has bad effects on only a small part of its audience.

The two speakers stake out their sharply divergent views in alternating statements, then engage each other's arguments, and finally address some questions briefly at the end of the debate.

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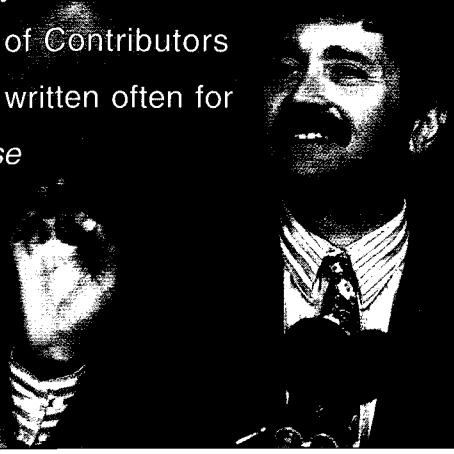
MICHAEL MEDVED is a film critic, author, and national radio host. He was co-host of the PBS movie review show "Sneak Previews" for 12 years, and chief film critic of the *New York Post* for five years. His book *Hollywood vs. America* was a bestselling indictment of the entertainment industry. Medved is a member of the Board of Contributors at *USA Today,* and has written often for *The American Enterprise* on subjects ranging from honeymoons to keeping kosher.



DAVID HOROWITZ: I'm used to being the skunk at the garden party, but it's usually not this kind of party. I disagree with the view of television this morning's speakers have presented, and with their idea of TV's influence. I thought the documentary "Wasteland" was a total misrepresentation of what television is about.

No effort was made to distinguish between network TV, cable TV, pay-per-view TV. "Linc" is a black sitcom on Showtime, which you have to buy. The documentary made no effort to distinguish betweens shows on at 8:00 P.M. and shows on at 11:00 P.M. "Linc" is on late at night, as is one of the soft porn shows shown. By the way, the central character on "Linc" is a conservative.

It's bizarre to have Newt Minow quoted about the TV "wasteland." When he called network TV a wasteland, there were three networks. I remember seeing as a youngster all sorts of quality programs on those networks, including a modern opera, the NBC symphony, the Hallmark Hall of Fame's original plays featuring young actors like Paul Newman. There was also a professor who lectured on Shakespeare, as well as Bishop Sheen.

Today's television is a minimum of a 60-channel universe. If all three networks then were decent, we have at least 12 times as many decent channels now. We have the Discovery Channel, the Learning Channel, the History Channel, the Biography Channel, three C-SPAN channels. We have CNBC, MSNBC, and the Fox News Channel, as well as public television. And then there's Court TV. If a major trial or an important congressional hearing is taking place, you can see it on four or five different channels. And this is just the beginning. TV is going to explode into a 500-channel universe very soon.

For freedom, free markets, and free expression, this is an amazing development.

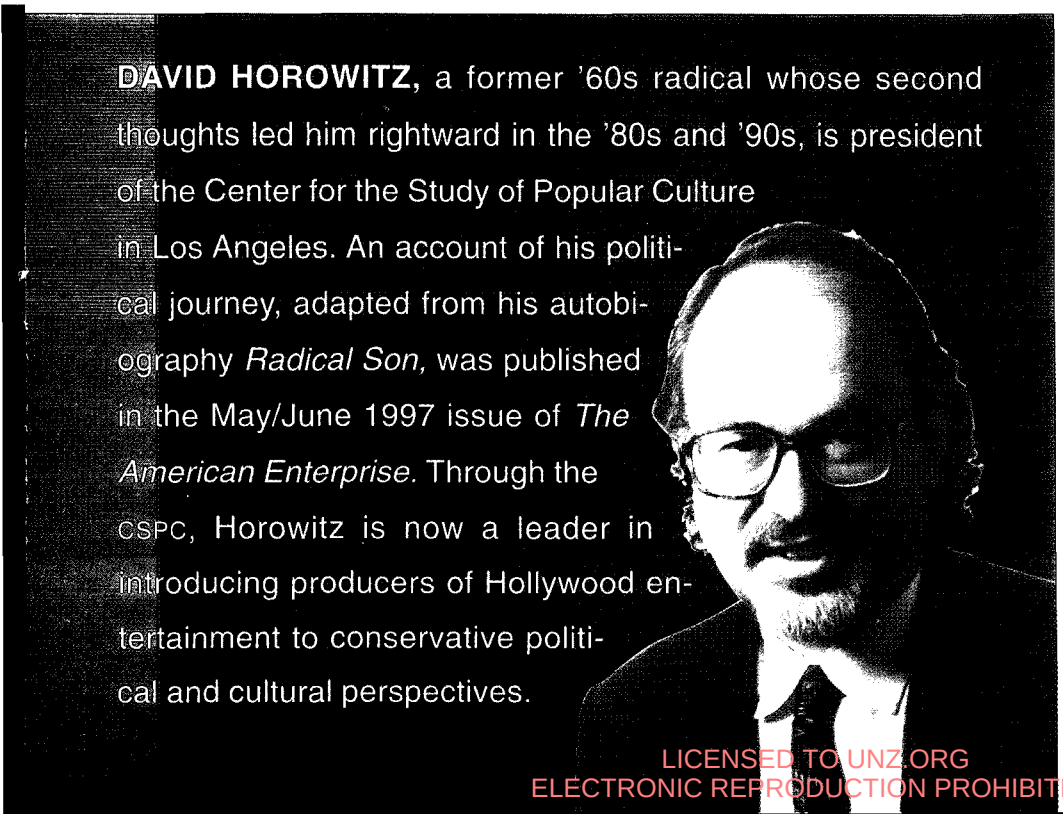
As for the impact that TV has on America, I recall attending the Clinton-Gore event where they launched the V-chip. They had one professor after another get up and tell us, "You've seen a hundred thousand murders by the time you're an adult, and this desensitizes you to human suffering, and this has a large impact on the violence in society."

Come on. Everybody in this room, then, has seen a hundred thousand murders. Do we have any serial killers here? Exactly the same television is watched in South Central Los Angeles and Beverly Hills; in Detroit, Michigan and Windsor, Canada. But Detroit has a murder rate vastly higher than Windsor, Canada.

Television can have an impact if you have no family, if you're in an abusive home. You'll see violence on television, and it might inspire you to commit more. But TV is like rap music. Do you think suburban kids, listening to rap, talking about shooting cops and beating up their bitches, then go out, join gangs and do that? It doesn't happen.

Being conservative, I'm more sensitive than liberals to the protection of children, but I think TV's effect is much overrated. And I don't think conserva-

DAVID HOROWITZ, a former '60s radical whose second thoughts led him rightward in the '80s and '90s, is president of the Center for the Study of Popular Culture in Los Angeles. An account of his political journey, adapted from his autobiography *Radical Son,* was published in the May/June 1997 issue of *The American Enterprise.* Through the CSPC, Horowitz is now a leader in introducing producers of Hollywood entertainment to conservative political and cultural perspectives.



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tives should imitate liberalism's campaign against the tobacco companies as a model for what to do to TV.

True, there are some shows that are out of line, from my standard. But we live in an incredibly diverse culture, and not all of it will please everybody. I do think "Melrose Place" should not be on at 8:00, and "Dawson's Creek" is another offender, but what do you think has a worse impact on children in this country: those shows or President Clinton and the impeachment scandals and the Republicans' decision to release all the garbage out of the Starr report? Those are the things that have kids across the country asking about oral sex.

Too many conservatives are uncomfortable, shall we say, with democracy. Take the violence on the Jerry Springer show. "People are identifying with that violence," we're warned. But in fact the lower middle class—ordinary people all over America—are looking down their noses at the black and white trash who appear on the Springer show. They don't identify with the trashy people; they look down their noses at them. In other words, Jerry Springer has given the same privilege to the lower middle class that the arts-and-croissant crowd has when it looks at the middle class.

America is a difficult place in some ways. It's wonderful because it is so diverse, but it's also difficult if you like things neatly ordered. But does anyone really long for the days when there were three networks and Walter Cronkite had enormous power? Or are we much better off now?

When I see something I absolutely can't stand produced by the Hollywood Left, I flip 30 channels away, and that's what everybody has the privilege to do.

The V-chip is just a Clinton scam. Where do you think the new TV set with the chip is going, in the kids' room? It's going in the living room.

The rating system is another travesty. Rating systems are what produced the graphic violence in the film industry, because once we give somebody a "bad" rating, it becomes a license. The producers say, "Well, if I'm going to get the rating for one use of the *F* word, hey, let's use it a hundred times. If I'm going to get a bad rating for this little piece of violence, I'll show you real violence!" Also, it is close to impossible to rate all of the product that comes out.

Conservatives suffer tremendously from always appearing to be the censors.

—David Horowitz

Conservatives are too parochial. How many people here watch three hours a day of television? And how many of that is something besides C-SPAN, CNBC, or MSNBC? Conservatives don't watch enough TV to know what's really airing. There are numerous religious programs on television, for example, including "Touched by an Angel" and a spin-off from it. There is "JAG," which ran an episode on how feminists are slowly destroying the military by lowering standards. Elaine Donnelly of the Center for Military Readiness said she couldn't have written a better script herself.

There's so much on TV that's quite good. The sitcoms are all about families coming together. Each episode begins with a family, however defined. There is a conflict, and then the family comes together. If it's a diverse family, so be it. It is reflecting what America is about.

I think the conservative movement suffers tremendously from being parochial and naysaying and always appearing to be the censors. Liberals have a remarkable talent for maneuvering conservatives into that position. We do not want to be in that position.

There are plenty of producers in Hollywood, including left-wing ones, who are very concerned about shows like "Melrose Place." They all have children; no matter what their politics they have the same concerns everyone in this room has.

I would not like to see the conservative movement launch a crusade for more V-chips, more rating systems, and try in this era of incredible freedom to do to TV what has been done to the tobacco companies.

MICHAEL MEDVED: The last time I spoke on the issue of media accountability, it was a somewhat different setting: Two weeks ago, I was on "Politically Incorrect" along with Jerry Springer.

With no disrespect at all to my friend David Horowitz, I have to report that Jerry Springer said the same thing about his show that David did, except he said it far less eloquently, of course. Springer said, "We need a voice for the little people of America, the trailer park people." What a vision that is of the trailer park people. How profoundly condescending and insulting it is for people who may not be represented in this room.

Let me respond quickly to a couple of things David said that are very provocative, and if I may say so, profoundly misleading. One is the idea that television is better than ever before. That is not entirely untrue; it's just half the picture. There are more worthy programs than ever before on A&E and Bravo and PBS and American Movie Classics and C-SPAN. David is right: If you want to watch something good any time during a 24-hour cycle, you can find it.

Is this a positive development? Absolutely. But at the same time the truly disgusting alternatives are also proliferating, and gaining a much larger audience.

David has fallen into the trap of the old line that if television has negative effects, why doesn't it have negative effects on everybody?

That takes us to the analogy with tobacco companies. I, by the way, do not feel compelled to defend them. I think

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tobacco companies are rightly stigmatized. They are hardly blameless in terms of their behavior regarding public health.

One argument the tobacco companies always used was, If cigarettes are so deadly, how come my Aunt Mildred smoked three packs a day and lived to be 82 years old and never coughed a day in her life? It's true: Not everybody who smokes gets sick from it. But enough people who smoke get very sick from it, which makes it a gigantic public health problem.

Similarly, when you put an ad on TV, you know you're not going to sell everybody who sees that ad. For instance, how many people here have seen an ad on TV for the Lexus automobile? Almost all of you have—it's a famous, award-winning series of ads. Now how many people here have ever gone out and purchased a Lexus? Raise your hands. One!

I've been a film critic for 20 years. If violence seen in motion pictures automatically translated into actual violence, film critics would have the highest murder rate in the country. I don't know about my colleagues, but I haven't harmed anyone for years.

But does this show that violence doesn't affect anyone? That's David's argument: Those suburban kids may watch all kinds of violence, but they don't go out and murder their grandmothers.

Yet just because an advertisement doesn't sell everybody, doesn't mean it fails to sell anybody. David is absolutely correct that the people who are most affected by televised violence, as all the studies suggest, are precisely those people who are most vulnerable. But does that mean that televised violence is harmless?

No. It's not even harmless for the suburban kids David holds up as a model. I, for one, don't think it's so harmless to have suburban kids geeked out on pop culture to the extent that they try to talk like ghetto youth and emulate ghetto youth. There are enough horrifying cases in every corner of the country to suggest that this is not such an innocent phenomenon.

The fundamental negative impact of TV is the destruction of America's attention span.

—Michael Medved

Go back to the Lexus ad. Even those of you who never bought the car were influenced by the ad. It redefined Lexus as a status symbol, as something desirable, as something sexy, something chic. That's the problem with irresponsible sexual behavior and violence on television: It redefines that behavior, even for those who don't imitate it directly (and most people don't). It portrays unwholesome, anti-social behavior not only as acceptable, not only as normal, but as profoundly desirable and sexy and manly and hip.

I must say the person I most agreed with this morning was Mr. Gatto, the teacher who talked about the need to engage kids with real life beyond television. The biggest problem is not the low *quality* of TV, though most TV is of low quality. No, the worst problem is the high *quantity* of TV. The average American now watches four hours a day, 28 hours a week. You could make every show pass a strict virtue test and that would improve some things, but the real problem would still be there, particularly for our children: TV would still be taking them away from reading, away from exercise, away from the world, away from the community, away from life.

To return to David's smoking analogy, I remember when people began to focus on the health dangers of cigarettes, the first reaction was, "Let's reduce tar and nicotine and make cigarettes safer."

And it's good that they did that. Now cigarettes will kill you less quickly. But the deadly impact is still there. Cleaning up TV is good too, but the impact is still there as long as Americans are watching 28 hours a week. The contribution conservatives can make is to call not just for better TV, though that's worthwhile, but for *less* TV. Not less TV broadcast over the air, but less TV consumed by viewers.

One objection will be that this message will never convince all Americans. A lot of Americans like their TV. They say they don't, but they really do. They're deeply committed to it.

But to say, therefore, that we will not try to convince some parents to watch less TV themselves, and to encourage their kids to watch less TV, is similar to saying that because we will never get all children in charter schools or private schools or home schooled, we should therefore do nothing about bad schools.

There is much evidence that, despite our having more TV channels than ever before, people are already beginning to watch just a tiny bit less TV. Dissatisfaction is out there. Let's respond by saying, "You don't have to wait for Hollywood producers, for action spurred by *The American Enterprise*. You can make a difference right now in your own family's TV consumption, and that will really help your kids."

I would use home schooling as a model. When people began home schooling in a serious way a decade ago, it was viewed as bizarre, dangerous, un-American. Now there are 2 million American kids who are home schooled. If we had 2 million American kids grow up in families that were TV-free, or at least TV-limited, what a huge impact that would have.

The second objection people will make is, "What about your kids' friends? They'll treat your children like weirdos." Well, I have a 12-year-old, a nine-year-old, and a six-year-old, and they encounter this all the time because they grow up in a TV-free household. The answer to the peer pressure argument is simple: There is no more important gift

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a parent can give to a child than the courage to be different, the courage to say no, the courage to look at what another child is doing and say, "That's not me. I don't go there." Such a child has a much better chance of saying no to drugs and promiscuous sexuality and other things later on.

That brings me to the final objection: "It's too late. People are already addicted to TV." You know what? Television addiction is relatively easy to shake. Every year during "Turn Off TV Week" there are some people who say, "Wait a minute, I lived without TV for a week. I like this; what a pleasure. There are other things in life."

The timing for this crusade is excellent right now. We're about to have something called HDTV, digital TV. The sets are going to cost thousands of dollars. What an opportunity to reach thoughtful people. We can say to them, "We not only want to help you save your children, we also want to save you thousands of dollars."

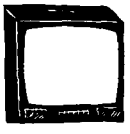
In the end, no one wants on his tombstone, "Here lies our beloved husband and father, who selflessly devoted 13 years of his life to his television set." (That's the American average, by the way.) Nor will anyone whisper on his deathbed, "I only regret that I didn't watch more TV."

HOROWITZ: There are two models of governing a society. One is the democratic model, and the other is the authoritarian model, which says people aren't able to take care of themselves and therefore we have to do it for them. I think of this as the Hillary Clinton model when it comes to things like tobacco.

The issue with the tobacco company is very simple. There's not a person in the country who doesn't know it's dangerous to your health, and yet some people persist in smoking. So what do we do? Do we hound the companies who are supplying a want, or do we try to persuade people? I have no objection to Michael's persuading people not to watch TV. Personally, as a parent, I've *wanted* my children to watch TV, and I saw that they learned a tremendous amount from it.

Everybody in this room has seen a hundred thousand murders. Do we have any serial killers here?

—David Horowitz



I suspect this is a TV-illiterate audience. It reminds me of when I was with Gore and Clinton and 200 liberals. Just as you only watch C-SPAN, they only watch public television. There was a black state senator who got up in front of 200 elite intellectual liberals and started railing against the negative images of blacks on TV. "I long for the day," he said, "when two normal black people can hug on television."

My wife, who was completely apolitical up to that moment, just exploded. She knew perfectly well that our kid was brought up entirely on black sit-coms where the husband is a doctor and the wife is a lawyer and they're always hugging each other.

So the reality is very different from the perspective in Washington. Politicians generally don't watch TV or see movies. Bob Dole went to see one picture in 20 years and had to be a film critic.

The issue is, Do we have any confidence in people? We live in a democracy and therefore we have to have that confidence, though admittedly sometimes it's misplaced.

I don't know that Jerry Springer is a case where that confidence is misplaced. Do you know what I do when I'm debating socialists and radicals? I say, "Have you guys ever watched Jerry Springer? You think you're going to change the world? You think you're going to make a whole new world with those people?"

People abuse themselves, true, but what's the remedy? The remedy is to try to relate to them one on one, not to penalize everybody and wind up with a dictatorial caretaker state.

Look what's happened with the Clinton administration and the V-chip. Imagine if Ronald Reagan and Ed Meese had summoned the heads of studios and networks to Washington, held the carrot of new broadcast spectrum over their heads, and warned them, "We don't like what you're putting on television. If you don't do something about it, we're going to do something to you."

There would have been screams of outrage in every editorial room in the country and on every television newscast. But when Clinton actually did that, there was a deafening silence, because Clinton is a great seducer of Hollywood. I was one of the few people in Hollywood who wrote publicly against the V-chip and the rating system, even though everyone there hated the idea.

I remember Clinton looking into the cameras and saying to the television producers, "I want you to produce programs that your grandchildren can be proud of." Well, I have grandchildren, and let me tell you, a "safe" show like "Barney" could drive you to suicide if you watch it too much.

Remember, too, there are kids programs and there are adult programs. I was in San Diego and saw a play in which a woman is egging on another person to murder an elderly gentleman and in the course of doing it to torture him by plucking out his eyes.

What I was watching, of course, was Shakespeare's *King Lear.* There is no way to decide—certainly, please, don't have a government committee or bureaucracy decide—what's good for people and what's bad, when violence is justified and when it's not. I remember when we had one off-the-wall Republican attack *Schindler's List* for nudity and violence.

The human community sometimes resembles a zoo. But we shouldn't give up the best thing we possess as conserva-

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tives, which is that we distrust government wisdom and we cherish people's freedom. We have to take the consequences that go along with that.

Again, in terms of children, television has a tremendous amount of good programming. Not all of it is very sophisticated. Some of it is fairly simple, but then the public isn't so sophisticated at all levels.

At the V-chip conference, Jack Valenti of the Motion Picture Association, who's a Democrat, and Tom Selleck and I were the only people who had any kind of disagreement whatsoever. We got up and Valenti said, "I have a list here of the 60 top-rated network shows, and there's not a single one with any violence in it," He was telling the truth, not that it made the slightest impression on anyone there. In fact, network TV has cleaned up its act, and the violence is on cable, where films are rerun, and on the nightly news.

I repeat: You can learn a lot by watching television. I don't recommend it six hours a day or three hours a day. I don't think there should be a television on at dinnertime. I think homework should be done first. But I noticed in the last issue of *The American Enterprise* that TV watching by children has actually gone down by about 12 percent in recent years. Of course, what they're doing instead is playing those violent video games. But even there, a child who is shooting people on a video screen is not necessarily going to become a violent person. It's just a way of getting out aggressions and angers. Actually, it's a relatively civil way.

The basic principle of democracy, whether we're dealing with television or any other social phenomenon, remains the same: Some people, like Michael, will have their kids not watch television and will home school them. Other individuals will want their kids to be socialized and not to be called weird and to participate in the popular culture. Certainly there are important public interests at stake, but they should be handled by persuasion. That's the American way.

It's good there's a movement among advertisers to monitor what's on TV, and I think everybody possesses, unless

The biggest problem is not the low *quality* of TV, though most TV is of low quality. No, the worst problem is the high *quantity* of TV people watch.

—Michael Medved

they're sociopaths, some desire to make things better, a desire that overrides concern for profits and one that will pull things up.

Oprah, for example, changed her show entirely in revulsion against the trash talk shows. She made her show positive, and it actually worked out for her both ways. I guess she could afford to take a beating on the ratings, but now she's got a high-rated show, she's incredibly influential, and she does positive things.

MEDVED: First of all, the melancholy experience of Oprah should not be held up as a role model. She calls her show "change your life TV," but it's become "change the channel TV." She's lost 25 percent of her ratings. She's now the third-ranked talk show behind Jerry Springer and, God help us, Judge Judy. (You see, we're not all TV illiterate, David.)

Let me also say that those of us who don't want our children immersed in a TV culture do want our children socialized. I think my kids are socialized. By the way, all three attend public school a half-day, and then they come home for the second half of the day for religious instruction. They've had a wonderful experience in public schools so far, knock on wood.

I agree that to some small extent there have been improvements in TV. But they have only occurred in the face of relentless public pressure.

Go back to the anti-tobacco campaign. The proportion of Americans who smoke has gone down from about 50 percent to 25 percent. That is a major success. True, we'll never get every American to stop smoking. We can't even get every American to stop using heroin. But does that mean we should just give up? It seems entirely appropriate to me for society to discourage smoking. I would not support, nor I assume would anyone here support, making cigarettes illegal. Likewise, I've never said or written anything suggesting that there should be a government role in controlling what's broadcast.

I think we all believe in free speech. To say, however, that there is a limited governmental role does not mean that we need to deride the V-chip. The V-chip empowers parents, and that is particularly important for parents who may be financially pressed, for parents in two-career families, for those who may have a difficult time monitoring their kids.

I understand that some of these devices will allow people to make the TV inoperative for certain times of the day. So that if you want to ensure your child does not sit down and "veg out" the moment he comes home from school, you can do that.

Beyond glamourizing violence, beyond glamourizing destructive sexual behavior, beyond encouraging rudeness, the fundamental negative impact of TV is the destruction of America's attention span. You see the impact of television quite directly in the Clinton scandals. Presidential spokesman Joe Lockhart made a profoundly revealing comment last week when the Republicans were talking about investigating the Chinese campaign donations. Lockhart said, "This is like going back to an old failed TV show and doing reruns when it got lousy ratings the first time."

Americans now view everything with a remote control in hand. If you don't like it, if you're bored by it, change the channel. "Hey, we've done this impeachment channel before. Let's change the channel and move on."

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Does this have an impact on American marriage, this idea that if something on the screen becomes a little boring or a little bit old, then you change the channel?

Some of the studies that I find most horrifying are the ones that suggest American males' average time staying on a single channel is less than a half hour. That means, with all this wonderful TV, people are not watching an entire show to its conclusion.

Any teacher can tell you the overwhelming problem kids suffer today, aside from broken homes and drugs and violence. I'll give it its formal psychological name (in Yiddish!): *shpilkes. Shpilkes* is exactly what it sounds like. It's a kid who can't sit still and cannot concentrate for more than five minutes at a time.

This surely has something to do with the fact that the time a single TV shot is held before an image is shifted has gone from an average of about 40 seconds in the early days of television in the 1950s, to now less than five seconds, according to the *New York Times.*

One could say the entire purpose of television is to make people impatient. What is a commercial? "I want that hamburger, and I want it now!"

Let me conclude with some practical suggestions, to add to the good things that were said this morning. First, tell people, again with the inducement of saving them money, that if they want to have a TV in the living room, fine, but keep TV out of the bedrooms. Today, the majority of American children under 18 have a TV in their bedrooms. That is ludicrous, because it ensures parents will have zero influence on what their children watch, and it also means that at key times, when the busy family may even be home together, they will scatter to their different bedrooms.

And while you're getting rid of TV in the kids' bedrooms, get rid of it in your own bedroom as well. My wife is a clinical psychologist who specializes in helping people keep their marriages together. One question she always asks a couple who come in with difficulties is, "Do you have a TV in the bedroom?" Of course, the answer is yes, and she suggests, "While you're trying to work on this marriage, either put the TV in the closet or throw it away." Not just for reasons of intimacy, although that's involved too. Think what kind of message it sends to your spouse if, after a long and weary day, when sleep finally arrives to take your soul, you turn your tired eyes and the last face you glimpse is David Letterman?

When I see something I absolutely can't stand produced by the Hollywood Left, I flip 30 channels away, and that's what everybody has the privilege to do.

—David Horowitz

Another suggestion: Make a TV schedule. David is right; there are all kinds of good things on TV. Every newspaper in the country now gives a listing of TV offerings on Sunday for the week ahead. Let the family sit down together and decide what to see and put a copy of that schedule on every TV in the house and another copy on the door of every refrigerator, and stick to it. Most of the TV watching we do and most of the TV watching that is destructive is just an attempt to fill empty spaces in life. It's not stuff you really want to see; it's just stuff that's there.

Keep a TV diary. Even eight-year-old kids can be encouraged to do this. No need to keep a lengthy record. Just sit down at night before you go to bed and write down what you've watched that day. You don't even have to write a review of it, unless you're a budding critic. Any child or adult who does that will be appalled at how he spends his time and will become a more responsible TV consumer.

Finally, take a nice embroidered tablecloth and put it in front of the TV screen to hide it. Put a nice bowl of fruit on top of the tablecloth, maybe a vase of flowers, so that you don't come into the room and the first thing you see is a blank TV screen asking to be turned on.

Then when it's time to watch the PBS show on Frank Lloyd Wright, or Ben Wattenberg's show, you lift up the tablecloth, put the corner underneath the bowl of fruit or the vase of flowers, and you turn the TV on and you indulge. That's the difference between using TV as a glass of wine with dinner and using TV as a bottle of Thunderbird in a brown paper bag.

Questions & Answers

HOROWITZ: I'm in total agreement with the last thing Michael said. I think we can all agree that we need our educators and our preachers to encourage people to be more responsible in their use of the tools that are being given to them.

BEN WATTENBERG, American Enterprise Institute: I have listened to both of you, and I agree with both of you, and I realize why: You agree with each other on a whole lot of things. Some people, like Bob Bork, proudly preach censorship. Would either of you care to say something about that position?

MEDVED: Yes: It can't work. I have a chapter in one of my books called, "The Censorship Temptation," and I think it is a temptation that should be resisted.

One reason censorship is unworkable is because the industry is not organized the way it was in the past. Once upon a time there were eight studios. If you could get them to agree, you could control everything. Today, even if you have three networks and the major studios agreeing, you've controlled nothing because there are too many alternate means of production.

WATTENBERG: My other question is, If you get people away from television, what will they do with that time? A teenager, for example, is going to go on the Web, or to the movies, to the magazines, to video games, to radios, to CDs, and to books.

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And there's more than a normal amount of trash there. So in fact there's nothing you can do other than be a good parent, because the problem isn't just television, it's the whole pop culture.

MEDVED: I tell audiences if you cut TV a half-hour each day, that gives you an extra 15 hours a month. The main thing to do with the time is talk to each other. An awful lot of American couples see psychologists, and the main complaint people have is, "We don't talk to each other." One reason they don't talk to each other is there's no time.

Let me give you another example of what happens in a TV-free household, from my own life last night at home. My six-year-old fancies himself a Marine, and he's already announced he wants to become Marine Commandant some day. While his parents were away, his sisters allowed him to build a Marine fort. He took every chair in the house to create a huge fort in the family room. It was annoying because we had to move all the chairs back, but on the other hand, this kept him busy for a couple of hours. There was life before television; I believe there can be life after.

JOAN ALMON, Waldorf Early Childhood Association: I was grateful for what Mr. Medved said about American attention spans. Look at something like "Sesame Street," considered benevolent and sweet and good. They undertook deliberate testing at the beginning of it to see what would hold children's attention. They found that if they just put up their segments in a relaxed, casual way, children lost interest. If they put them up very fast—now it's at 40 segments per hour—that would hold children's attention. They also use a lot of zoom techniques with the camera to get adrenaline going. It was all very consciously thought out.

I'm profoundly committed to democracy. My parents fled Nazi Germany, and I've traveled all through Eastern Europe in the bad old days. So I know what totalitarianism is like. But it is not a level playing field when you have little children sitting in front of a TV that is so manipulating. The psychologists know exactly how to get the child addicted to television.

HOROWITZ: I agree. But the missing factor in most of the discussion here is parents. The V-chip is a scam because there is more sophisticated technology which lets you program your TV so it will only get certain channels, or only get certain programs. Of course, you probably have to ask your kids how to program it.

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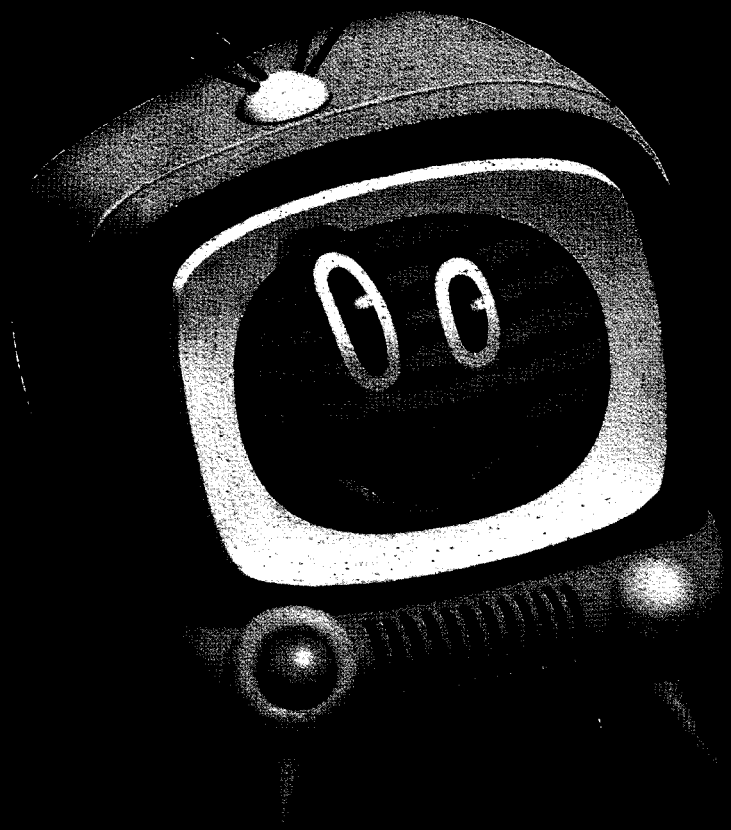

BY JOEL KOTKIN

Josh Rose works out of a former toilet bowl factory. Like many creative people in Hollywood, he is often asked to produce material appropriate to that setting. But he won't.

Earlier this year, Rose, who runs Vision Art, the special-effects subsidiary of Santa Monica Studios, was asked by one of Hollywood's most powerful directors to work on a scene he considered indecent and immoral. He said no—and cost his fledgling, family-owned studio both a powerful

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ally and some badly needed work.

"This guy believes that women should be either naked or dead," the 26-year-old Rose recalls in his frigid office on an unusually cool California morning. "We consider this a family business, and there are projects we won't take. We won't do anything degrading to women, or anything that has gratuitous violence. A good family doesn't work that way."

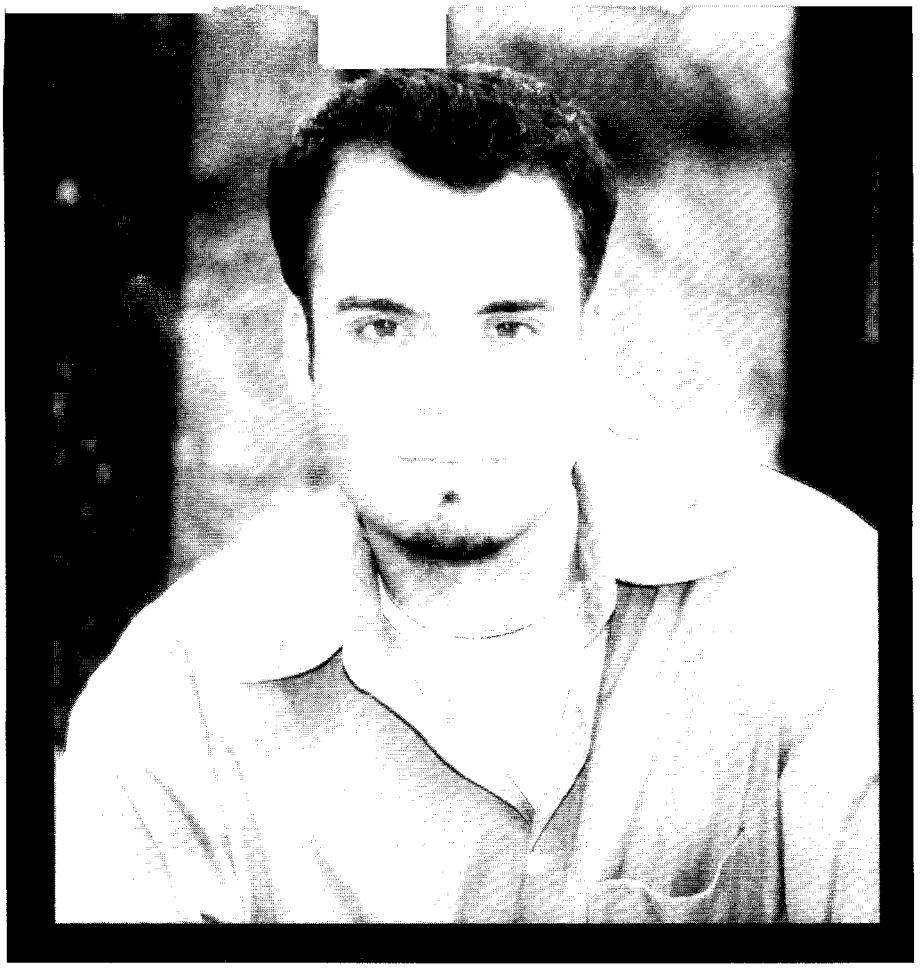
Like many people in workaday Hollywood, Rose in some ways is not so different from Americans who get up and design semiconductor chips, develop marketing campaigns for cereal, or teach civics to high schoolers. He's recently married, considers himself a libertarian-leaning conservative, opposes abortion, and goes to church near his Malibu home. You may never have heard of him or his company, but you've probably seen their work—on the TV series "Star Trek: Voyager" or in movies like *Men in Black, Dr. Dolittle,* and *Independence Day.*

This is the *other* Hollywood, where people work hard and create wholesome products—and don't sleep in the Lincoln Bedroom when they're in Washington. The Josh Roses of our entertainment world are the backbone of an industry dominated by small, privately held companies carrying out skilled crafts. Many of these workers try to produce things they can be proud of before their families and the rest of society.

True, a quite different side of Hollywood exists, filled with various slimeballs and loud-mouthed activists. These are the people who aggressively promote wacky environmental and social causes, mock traditional morality, and generally drive mainstream Americans mad.

Yet many observers, particularly conservatives, don't know much about the broader entertainment industry. They sometimes reduce Hollywood, erroneously, to an evil cabal of monolithic uniformity, which blinds them to important facts.

TAE *Contributing Writer Joel Kotkin, a fellow of the Pepperdine Institute for Public Policy and the Reason Foundation, lives in the Hollywood hills.*



We consider this a family business, and there are projects we won't take. We won't do anything degrading to women, or anything that has gratuitous violence.

—Josh Rose

Take political activism, for instance. Activist celebrities offer skeptics an easy target. They are capable of astoundingly stupid statements, and their every move is reported. Whenever there is a left-wing event, it is the stars' names that are plastered in the papers.

But lots more businessmen, investment bankers, and trust fund heirs write big checks to the same trendy causes—unnoticed. In fact, since the beginning of the Clinton administration, the most loyal financial backers of the President and his party, outside of the unions, have been Wall Street financiers, trial lawyers, the health industry, and real estate interests, *not* entertainment moguls. In 1998, for example, the securities industry alone contributed over $10 million to the Democrats—$4 million more than the entertainment industry.

Yet you don't read indignant screeds from conservatives attacking Revlon's Ron Perelman (who both helped bankroll Clinton and was reportedly involved in offering Monica Lewinsky a job to get her out of Washington). Conservatives don't demonize Wall Street because they know there are right-wingers as well as left-wingers on Wall Street. What they don't realize is that Hollywood too shelters a broad range of social and political views.

TO observe Hollywood's better nature—which includes substantial numbers of individuals who, while not necessarily conservative, are genuinely concerned with morality, religion, and the

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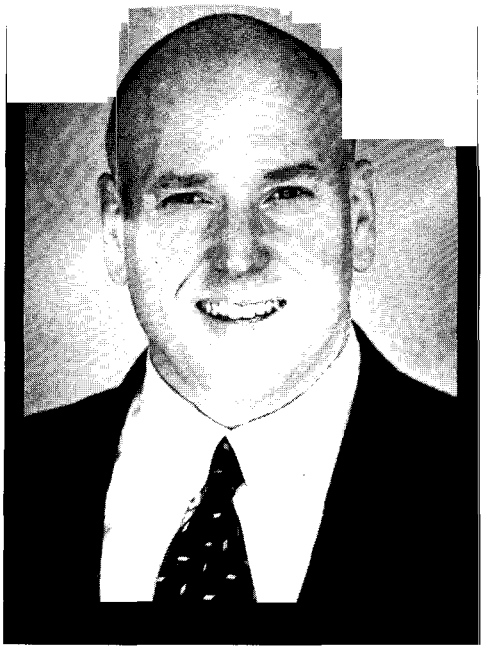


family—one has to break the industry down into its elements. At the top are the studios, which employ only a small portion of the workers but dominate distribution and marketing. For the most part they are amoral entities (like most giant businesses), run by generally faceless managers. Some of the owners, like corporate executives anywhere, are conservatives—for instance, Fox's Rupert Murdoch. Other studio executives are middle of the road, such as Disney's Eisner. While still others, for example DreamWorks' Jeffrey Katzenberg, are clearly in the liberal camp.

Then there are the pampered stars and top directors. They are usually mad egotists, and now eat up roughly 60 percent of total film budgets, up from 40 percent earlier in the decade. They are richer and more powerful than ever. This, plus a celebrity-crazed media, has given them tremendous visibility.

As far back as the 1920s and '30s, there were stars who were conservative (like John Wayne and Jimmy Stewart), and others who dallied in liberal, socialist, and even Stalinist causes. But then as now, Dorothy Parker's maxim held true: The only *-ism* Hollywood really believes in is plagiarism.

Actors today are far more often on the left than the right, but Hollywood has its share in both camps. Alec Baldwin, Barbra Streisand, Stephen Spielberg, Ted Danson, and Ed Asner tilt to the left; Charlton Heston, Bruce Willis, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and Mel Gibson to the right. But even here conservative criticism of Hollywood sometimes break down: Willis, Schwarzenegger, and Gibson have all made extraordinarily violent and amoral movies. Liberal Spielberg, meanwhile, has probably produced more decent family entertainment than all the conservatives in Hollywood combined.

There are those in Hollywood who are out for themselves, but also those who are good people. The good people do care about morality and the social effect of their work.

—Cody Cluff

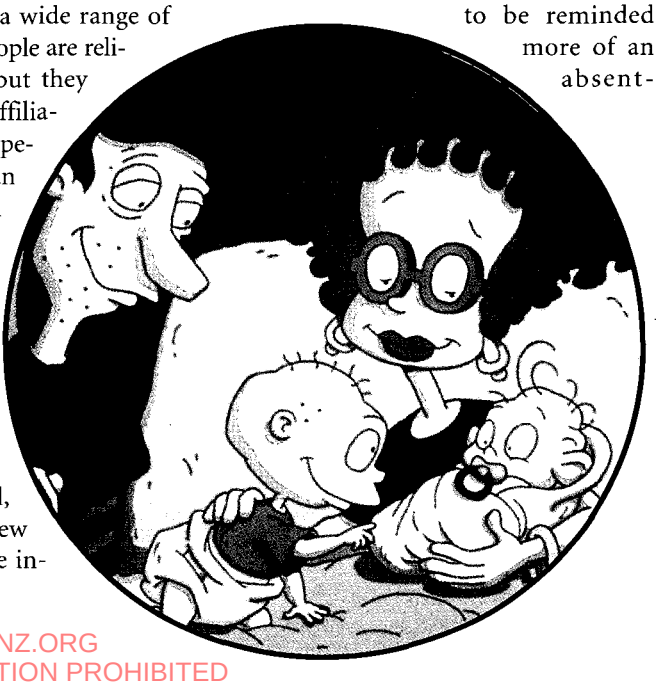
IN any case, much of the action that really matters in Hollywood takes place much lower on the totem pole. Only 16 companies in the industry employ more than a thousand people. Most of the work gets done by 5,000 small- to medium-sized businesses. (Indeed, more than one out of three of California's entertainment industry workers—a total of 90,000 or so people—are employed as free-lancers.)

Hollywood's small firms are staffed not by stars wearing chest toupées or producers driving Lamborghinis, but by middle-class graphic artists, set painters, accountants, lawyers, cameramen, and cartoonists embodying a wide range of beliefs. Some of these people are religious or conservative, but they are quiet about their affiliations. For most of what special-effects whiz John Van Vliet calls "migrant film workers," climbing the greasy pole, not idealistic causes, is job one.

Hollywooders in small shops operate in a cutthroat capitalist atmosphere. This, more than ideology, contributes to the amoral, dog-eat-dog worldview long associated with the industry. Cody Cluff, president of the Los Angeles Entertainment Industry Development Corporation, explains that there are those in Hollywood who are out for themselves, but also those who are good people. The good people, adds Cluff (himself a practicing Mormon and political conservative), do care about morality and the social effect of their work. Some producers simply look at box office receipts and don't care how many body parts or minds are mangled in the process. Many others care about family-oriented entertainment, and believe it can make money.

The real battleground for this struggle of conscience within the entertainment industry lies in the minds and hearts of the creators. Most creative personalities—like Arlene Klasky—are fairly apolitical people. Yet Klasky is not unconcerned about social trends. She is a mother of two boys, ages ten and 13, and she aims her work squarely at the youngest consumers in America. Her "Rugrats" television series is a big commercial success, spawning a hit movie this year that is expected to top $100 million in ticket sales. (Needless to say, a sequel is already planned for 2000.)

To see Arlene Klasky arrive at the rambling Klasky-Csupo studio complex along Hollywood's Highland Avenue is to be reminded more of an absent-



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Glimpses of Good TV, I

Bookish Broadcasting

By Martin Morse Wooster

Talk to authors about the trials of the writing life and you'll often hear horror stories about their book tours. Major authors typically spend weeks promoting their books on the road, where they face a steady diet of idiotic questions from interviewers who not only haven't read the book, but probably haven't read anything longer than a cue card in their life.

But there's one interview authors eagerly anticipate: Brian Lamb's "Booknotes" on C-SPAN. While most author profiles are five-minute infobites wedged between segments on celebrity gossip and the miracle diet of the month, Lamb presides over full hour conversations. And he reads the book.

There have been nearly 500 episodes of "Booknotes" since the series began in 1989, and the format is always the same. The set is deliberately spartan: two chairs, a coffee table, a black backdrop. There's a brief musical opening, but other than that it's nothing but uninterrupted talk. The set, Lamb writes in an introduction to a published collection of "Booknotes" interviews, was designed so that "nothing should distract from the author and his or her story."

The authors have written serious books—history, biography, current affairs. And no matter how many books an author has written, he can only appear on the show once. "That's a concept borrowed from *Broadcasting* magazine," Lamb writes. "Each week, *Broadcasting* publishes a profile of an industry leader. But it only happens once in your life, no matter what you go on to accomplish."

Lamb's questions tend to follow patterns. Who are you? Where did you grow up? Why did you write this book? Why did you dedicate the book to this person?

Some authors tend to rebel against this sort of staccato questioning. When Paul Johnson appeared to promote his *History of the American People*, he seemed to think that Lamb was his drill sergeant. ("How many children do you have?" "Three, sir!")

But Lamb is also capable of great tenderness. On one show a high school teacher named Sarah Gordon had written a history of the American railroad. She clearly had never been on television or been interviewed. Lamb gently led her through the show and helped her overcome her nervousness about being on stage.

With an hour to fill, Lamb gets authors to say interesting things. I had always thought of Ernest Lefever as just a gruff Cold Warrior, but seeing him on "Booknotes" I learned that Lefever, as a college student during the Depression, roamed around the South with only a few dollars in his pocket and a thirst for adventure.

Forrest McDonald is a distinguished historian at the University of Alabama and the author of many important books on American government. But "Booknotes" viewers learned that McDonald writes his books in the nude. "We live in total isolation out in the country," McDonald said, "and it's warm most of the year out in Alabama. So why wear clothes? I mean, they're just a bother."

You'll also learn surprising things about important figures in history. It's a cliché, for example, that some great men save everything, including their laundry lists. Martin Gilbert, the authorized biographer of Winston Churchill, told Lamb he was very glad Churchill saved his laundry lists; from them he learned that Churchill had made a secret trip to the Middle East in 1934 which would otherwise have remained unknown.

"Booknotes" is the crown jewel of C-SPAN's publication-related programming, but the network has much more book-related material. Every weekend, C-SPAN2 devotes 48 hours to books and authors. Turn on C-SPAN2 on a Saturday or Sunday, and you'll discover all sorts of interesting things: John Kenneth Galbraith talking about his life, book discussion groups from California, F.Scott Fitzgerald's daughter reading from *The Great Gatsby.*

By contrast, PBS—which is lavished with subsidies from government and grants from the great foundations and corporations that together support an annual budget about ten times that of C-SPAN—does not have a single book show.

Brian Lamb's "Booknotes" does what television at its best should do: Improve our lives by introducing us to interesting new books we ought to read. It's the most literate hour on American television.

Martin Morse Wooster is an associate editor of TAE.

minded, curly-haired Jewish mother from Scarsdale than one of the industry's rising creative stars. Besides "Rugrats," Klasky-Csupo has also created the charming Nickelodeon show "The Wild Thornberrys," about a girl who talks to animals, and produced "Santo Bugito," an insect-centered cartoon set in a largely Latino Texas town. They also animated the first three seasons of "The Simpsons."

"Having kids ourselves influences us. When we make something for kids we look as carefully as possible at what we are doing," Klasky insists. "There's an age that you create things that are soft. There's a level of pop culture in what we do, but nothing is risqué."

Gabor Csupo, Klasky's partner and ex-husband, is an immigrant from Hungary who co-founded the studio in 1982, seven years after fleeing his then-Communist country. He agrees that people who produce children's programming

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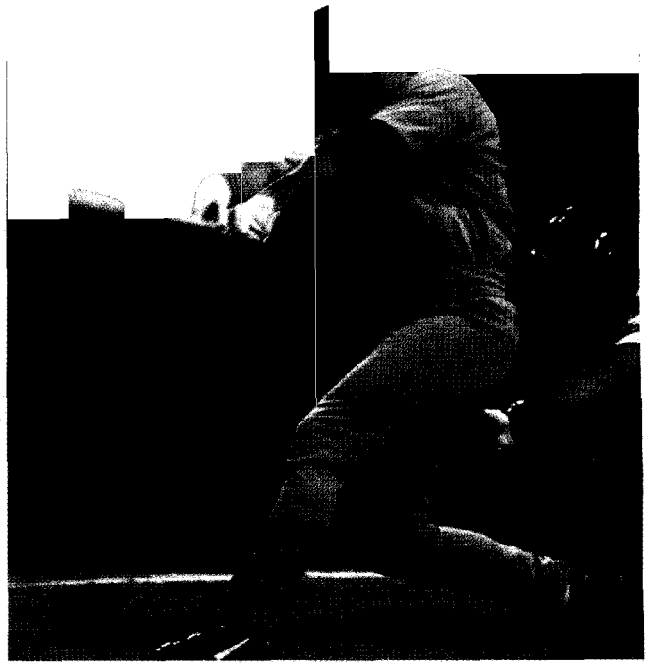
Glimpses of Good TV, II

Commercial TV's Grand Slam

By Curt Smith



Televised coverage of American sports started 60 years ago. Today, it is a kind of national ministry. Football leads the service: In 1951, the entire National Football League earned $50,000 in TV profit. In 1998, each *team* will get $74 million as its share of network TV earnings.

The reason: Amid TV's banality, trash, and endless reruns, sports are a veritable Sunday School in Hades. "Except for sports, networks are losing their audience," notes NBC's Dick Enberg. "TV is willing to spend millions on coverage that's seen as wholesome, clean, and you never know the end."

Freeze frame 1939: The picture was black and white, sound and sight were uneven, sponsors as small-time as the screen. On August 26, NBC aired TV's first pro sports event—the Reds and Dodgers, from Ebbets Field—to about 400 sets in the New York City area. Announcer Red Barber sat in the upper deck. "We had two cameras," he said. "One was by me, the other near the seats behind home plate, and I had to watch to see which one's red light was on. I could only guess where it was pointed." Making history, he was flying blind.

By 1996, Super Bowl XXX was able to lure a record 139 million viewers, and televised sports had become often spectacles of poetic intensity. In football, close-ups humanize the gladiators. In baseball, the cameras cover each pitch with epic anticipation. Only hockey (with its too-small puck) and soccer (with too little scoring and few time-outs) are diminished rather than enhanced on screen.

Compared to other TV deviance, sports are an arcadia of accountability, civic pride, old-fashioned heroism, and sentimentality. Take Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa's 1998 home run derby. How un'90s can a melodrama be? Elsewhere in our morally challenged time, hockey's Wayne Gretzky evokes a Canadian Mayberry. Football's Reggie White marks out right and wrong. "What a novelty," says Enberg. "Good guys win."

Many factors combine to give TV sports their power. For one, sports announcers are some of the most interesting characters to be found anywhere on the dial. Think of Bob Costas, Jon Miller, John Madden: The best of the lot fuse accuracy and passion, energy and naturalism, fact and illusion.

Football announcers used to arrive at game sites the day before kickoff. The big issue, recalls Fox's Dick Stockton, was "Could you go out and drink and still be in condition to do the next day's game?" Today's announcers study tape, meet players, grill coaches, and have production meetings. "By game time you're crammed with statistics and stories," says CBS's Sean McDonough.

The other even more impressive aspect of today's TV sports is the technology. The innovations began in 1956 when CBS director Frank Chirkinian sired the ear plug—or IFB, "Intercepted Feed Back"—that lets announcers directly hear the director. "Before this, a guy off-air relayed his directions to the announcer," explains Chris Schenkel. "The IFB let him know directly what the camera was about to show, smoothing broadcast flow."

Then, at the 1963 Army/Navy game, TV passed a critical dividing line. "This is *not* a new play!" Lindsey Nelson kept shouting during the first use of instant replay. "You are seeing what just occurred." Play-by-play men had long dominated the booth. Now the color analyst took precedence—drawing, defining, and deciphering what the replays showed.

"When I started as a 1960s analyst, you said one guy threw a pass, and another caught it," says the esteemed Pat Summerall. "You had no tools to work with." Now, instant replay etches each dribble and swing and referee's call indelibly. "It's sports' greatest invention in history," summarizes Hall of Fame broadcaster Curt Gowdy. "It shows why that play didn't work, or why it did. Let's see it again. There! See?"

When TV sports court viewers, technology performs the vows. Slow-motion. Stop-action. Telestrators—magic pens—sketching on screens. Tremendously skilled producers, directors, and cameramen reveal every twitch and crevice, linking sound and sight with almost never a miss. Remember 1939's two cameras? Fox used a record 31 for Super Bowl XXXIII (played this year).

Cameras in the catcher's mask now capture the ball's arc and batter's reflex right down to spatters of sweat. Information boxes link score, time left, and on-field status. In hockey, Fox fixed cameras to the killing zone of the goal net, and invented a computer enhancement which lights the puck and illumines the flow of play.

TV now routinely mikes coaches, players, basketball rims, and hockey boards. This allows us to hear bats connecting, shots ricocheting, and helmets butting.

More than ever, the remarkable televised coverage affirms: Sport is chockablock with verve.

Curt Smith is a former presidential speechwriter. His newest book—Our House, *on Boston' s Fenway Park—will be published this spring.*

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AP Photo/Ron Frehm

face a special mission. It is important, he says, to teach virtues even while entertaining people. When he's working on a more adult product for late night, he explains, or even for teenagers, he pushes the envelope further, but for young children, "we want to be entertaining, and also show them things they can learn about. Things like sharing, getting along, friendship. It's not without values."

Prince of Egypt, the new animated feature from DreamWorks, recently broke fresh ground along these lines. By attempting to sell a serious story with clear religious and moral underpinnings, the film shattered many '90s Hollywood taboos. In this, it reflects recent changes within the entertainment industry that could eventually lead Tinseltown to a less adversarial relationship with America's middle class. The public seems generally appreciative. Although far from a blockbuster, *Prince of Egypt* will likely go beyond $100 million in sales.

Tzivia Schwartz helped coordinate the remarkable consultations that DreamWorks held with Jewish, Christian, and Muslim scholars during production of the film. Religious leaders, including such conservative figures as Dr. Don Argue of the National Association of Evangelicals, the Reverend Jerry Falwell, and Dr. James Dobson, were shown advance drafts and asked for comments and suggestions.

"It was David Geffen who said, 'We don't own this literature. It belongs to two-thirds of humanity,'" recalls Schwartz, an attractive 37-year-old attorney. (Two-thirds of humanity may be just the number of customers Geffen hoped for.) Schwartz spent hours discussing plot and characterization with priests, ministers, rabbis, and imams, and changes were made to incorporate a number of their suggestions. "We wanted something worth seeing, that would reach out to people. We tried to do it sensitively."

Prince of Egypt actually concerned itself with ethics instead of the obsessions of hormone-driven teenagers. As a result, it is not only effective entertainment but also an inculcator of healthy virtues—a revolutionary product compared to recent Hollywood output. "Let's face it: It's a difficult story for the twentieth century," says Schwartz, who runs an observant kosher household with her husband and two children. "At the end, you get down to the basic story, which is God punishing evil. That's not an easy sell these days."

"Our kids see so much killing and sex. I liked the message [in Prince of Egypt], and I'm 100 percent behind it. It shows there are lots of people in Hollywood with good intentions."

—David Rose

One enthusiastic fan of *Prince of Egypt* and its message is David Rose, Josh's father, who is the founder and CEO of Santa Monica Studios. "I have seen it eight or nine times, and I was completely inspired by the values behind *Prince of Egypt,*" he reports. "Our kids see so much killing and sex. I liked the message, and I'm 100 percent behind it. It shows there are lots of people in Hollywood with good intentions."

A former contractor and oilman from Kansas City, David Rose moved to Los Angeles in 1986 to build his own high-tech studio. A gifted technologist, he focused heavily on the special-effects business and new methods of animation. Today Santa Monica Studios employs 75 people and is a prominent player in the field, with a long list of movie and television credits.

Rose draws creative and business inspiration from Hollywood's family-oriented past. "I am an heir of Walt Disney and Louie B. Mayer," he says. "Disney was an innovator who was from Kansas City like me. He even went to the same high school as my mother."

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Glimpses of Good TV, III

Iliad in Space

By Eli Lehrer

Warner Bros. TV/Shooting Star

When "Babylon 5" ended in November 1998, Internet newsgroups exploded with an orgy of praise for the show. "If anyone should doubt the power of television or the power of good storytelling, send them my way and I'll fill them in on how 'Babylon 5' has changed my life," wrote Maryland resident Laura Appelbaum in one of the milder declarations of affection for the show.

To an outsider, it might be difficult to see what made the show so special. Stuck with a low budget, the producers often substituted lighting effects for sets, and the mostly stage-trained cast tended to overact. In addition, the plots proved so complicated that casual viewers were lost, particularly after the series began to develop.

The show's secret ultimately lay in its sometimes-scary complexity: Series creator and executive producer J. Michael Straczynski mapped out an entire five-year storyline in advance, and thus crafted labyrinthine plots the likes of which television had never seen before. Over the course of the show, characters changed and grew, events and relationships developed, and threads ran between even the first and last episodes.

Set on a five-mile-long space station—"Casablanca in space" in Straczynski's words—"Babylon 5" centered around human and alien engagement in a war between two super-powerful alien races representing order and chaos. The series moved like a good novel, beginning with the lead-up to the war and ending with a one-hour epilogue on the death of the show's hero.

"The networks have gotten a picture of viewers as essentially slope-browed, prosthesis-jawed, Neanderthal knuckle-draggers with the attention span of a tumbleweed," Straczynski tells TAE. "They can't believe that viewers are willing to pay attention to something that lasts for more than 45 minutes. They don't understand that people want something more like the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*."

Comparing "Babylon 5" to Greek epics is hyperbole, but the series did engage serious moral issues in a sustained, if blunt, way. Unlike many TV shows, particularly those in the science fiction genre, "Babylon 5" never shied from religion either: One of the leading characters had a strong Jewish identity, and an explicitly Roman Catholic order of monks appeared at several key points.

"Science and religion ultimately are driven by the same impulses, even if the methods are different," says Straczynski. "It's silly for a science fiction show or any other kind of show to completely ignore religion."

Straczynski, who broke ground by writing nearly 90 percent of the show's episodes, also charted new territory by participating himself in Internet discussions throughout the series' run. "It was an educational opportunity in part; I wanted to show people how a television show really gets made," he explains. "It didn't really influence the writing of the show—writing by committee is what you too often get in lousy TV movies and shows."

For all its virtues, "Babylon 5" was not a show for children or ardent traditionalists: A major character had a lesbian relationship; in the course of the five-year run several sympathetic characters died violently; and titanic wars destroyed entire planets full of living beings. Importantly, however, "Babylon 5" always showed the consequences of violence. When the heroes killed, they didn't do it for fun, and death never became a casual event.

"Babylon 5" was also commercially innovative: By mapping out the plot in advance, the producers kept production overtime very low—a total of less than two weeks over five years—and as a result reaped profits and spawned imitators.

Students of TV already study the "Babylon 5" production model, and producers have launched several imitator-series on other networks. Although none have emerged as break-out hits, they have loyal followings.

"I think we've proved that television can be successful when it's good," Straczynski concludes. "We can't go on distracting ourselves to death with television. There's a hunger for stories with some meat to them."

Eli Lehrer is a TAE *Contributing Writer.*

Rose harkens back to the days when the vision of people like Disney and Mayer powered the industry. In those days, he suggests, moguls took responsibility for their products, not just the profits. That's why he admires the DreamWorks team that made *Prince of Egypt*, even though Rose himself is more of a political conservative than DreamWorks' prominent liberal troika of Spielberg, Geffen, and Katzenberg.

In the next few years, Rose hopes to enter Hollywood's big leagues. He's developing a $100 million, 6.5 acre facility on Olympic Boulevard, as well as pioneering an animation technology which he plans to use to create a new set of Walt Disney-like stories, all incorporating the tradi-

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tional moral view of life that he and his son Josh embrace. The studio is also working on several live-action features directed at a family audience, now one of the fastest-growing segments of today's entertainment marketplace.

To Rose, Hollywood's best assets are the pride of craft, the thrill of new technologies, and the sense that a large market exists for more wholesome programming. These are the elements that have combined recently in solid, relatively virtuous films like *Saving Private Ryan, Titanic,* and *The Horse Whisperer.*

THE Middle-American instincts of the original Tinseltown moguls still exist within Hollywood, though they are too often suppressed. Many Americans, however, have come to see Hollywood as a raw street corner to be avoided. Yet when good people avoid Hollywood, David Rose warns, it becomes easier for antisocial products to reach daylight.

Instead of vilifying the entertainment industry, he urges people of faith and morals to bring their ideas into Hollywood and become part of the solution. The medium isn't bad. It's just a matter of getting more people inside the gates who will listen to the American public—and then give them something of value.

Glimpses of Good TV, IV

News Shows Open Gateways to the Internet

By Ronald Bailey

For decades, TV's evening news shows have largely been headline services, offering scant substance in their brief stories. What "NBC Nightly News" calls its "In Depth" segment actually lasts a grand total of three minutes.

Network news once attracted huge audiences and wielded considerable power over public opinion. Critics from all points of the political compass complained about the superficial and biased ways that this power was sometimes exercised.

Today, their audiences are shrinking and aging, and the evening shows are facing stiff competition from the 24-hour cable news channels. But these pressures have improved the evening news programs—by forcing them to reshape themselves into gateways to a whole new world of deeper news and information on the Internet. They are in effect becoming electronic billboards, beckoning viewers to tune in, click on, and drop by their associated Web sites to check out developments more fully. And viewers are beginning to do just that.

First, some context. According to a recent survey by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, fully 41 percent of American adults now use the Internet, up from 23 percent only two years ago. And 64 percent of Internet users got news online at least weekly in December of 1998. This translates into 26 percent of all Americans obtaining news online.

The same survey found that 41 percent of Internet users go online to get more information on stories they saw first in newspapers or on television. And where do they go for news? Mainly to the Web sites associated with TV network news programs. The importance of the evening news programs as electronic signposts is underlined by the fact that only 3 percent of Internet users told surveyors they regularly log onto news magazines like *Slate* or *Salon,* that are only available online.

Americans increasingly use network news Web sites to get weather reports, stock quotations, sports scores, and breaking news when they want them. Viewers find especially valuable the access to search engines that help them find additional information on particular news stories of interest. (In my opinion, the most user-friendly site is msnbc.com, though foxnews.com runs a close second.)

In short, TV news shows are encouraging the American public to become better informed, and to move away from a few centralized sources to the vast new frontier-democracy of the Internet. In what numbers, you ask? The Web measurement firm Media Metrix reports that in November of 1998, NBC's Web site had 5.8 million visitors, of whom 4.7 million visited msnbc.com. ABC had 5.8 million visitors, of whom 3.2 million visited abcnews.com. Cbs.com was logged onto by 2.1 million users, of whom 1.4 million visited CBS Marketwatch. News Corporation Online received 3.6 million visitors, and 663,000 of them clicked onto foxnews.com. Although not a broadcast network, CNN nearly equalled ABC and NBC and clearly outstripped CBS and Fox with 5.8 million visitors, of whom 4 million clicked onto cnn.com. Another 1.4 million went to cnnfm.com, the business news site.

The broadcast evening news shows also encourage viewers to funnel into their affiliated all-news channels on cable, like MSNBC and the Fox News Channel. These cable networks tend to present more on-screen data graphics in their stories, as well as listing Internet links, further enriching the news stream available to the public.

Whatever their weaknesses, today's TV news programs are at least offering information that is more comprehensive, accessible, decentralized, and detailed than anything available on the tube in times past.

Ronald Bailey, science correspondent for Reason, *has produced many TV programs for PBS.*

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LET'S GET READY TO RUMBLE

Pro Wrestling Demonstrates How TV Can Take Over Life

By Paul A. Cantor

IF proof were ever needed that television has transformed American politics, the recent election of a former professional wrestler, Jesse "The Body" Ventura, as Governor of Minnesota provided irrefutable evidence. Television, and television alone, made Ventura's victory possible. Ventura admitted he never would have considered running if he had not already achieved name recognition; that name recognition was solely the result of his TV exposure as first a wrestler and then a colorful wrestling commentator. Building upon the villainous persona he'd concocted, Ventura the announcer played the role of rebellious outsider to the hilt. He adapted this role to Minnesota politics (his campaign slogan was "Retaliate in '98").

With years of experience in front of the camera, Ventura knew exactly how to play to television audiences, especially in the debates with his two establishment opponents, Democratic-Farmer-Labor candidate Hubert Humphrey, III, and Republican candidate Norm Coleman. Everybody now agrees the television debates provided the turning point in Ventura's campaign, transforming him from a long shot into a serious candidate. Humphrey insisted on including Ventura, assuming he would be exposed as a fraud.

But in fact the most common comment on Ventura's performance is that he came across as the only real man on the screen. This is the great paradox: The two "real" public servants, Humphrey and Coleman, seemed to be fakes, while the "fake" ex-wrestler struck many viewers as real, the authentic man of the people, continually cutting through the false political rhetoric to speak the truth in terms ordinary Minnesotans could understand. There is a famous entertainment maxim: "Sincerity is the most important thing in show business; if you can fake that, you can fake anything." Ventura proved that maxim just as true of politics as of show business, especially in an era when the two are increasingly indistinguishable.

Ventura himself seems to have lived an admirable life. He was a Navy SEAL for four years and by all accounts served his country courageously in wartime. He has been married to the same woman for over 20 years and raised a normal family. Looking around at public officials today, one wonders how many measure up to the standard of character set by Ventura. He may well prove to be an effective governor, especially if he remains true to the free market principles he enunciated in his campaign. Indeed, perhaps Ventura's finest moment in the debates came when he distinguished himself from his opponents by noting: "I'm the only candidate that spent his entire career literally working in the private sector.... My two opponents—they've been cashing government checks for well over 20 years."

Nevertheless, it is difficult not to see a disturbing trend in Ventura's election, no matter how personally attractive he is. His election seems to represent the increasing importance in American public life of what might be called pure celebrity. The key to Ventura's political victory was that, thanks to TV, he entered the race already well-known by the public. And *it did not matter what he was well known for.* Ventura's case highlights this paradox of modern televised life, because he was known *as a villain.* To be sure, he was a benign sort of villain. Still, his form of celebrity ought to have worked against his political success. Instead, *why* he was famous turned out to be far less important than the fact *that* he was famous. As our political life is drained of real issues and becomes more and more a matter of personal images, the realm of politics increasingly opens up to this kind of pure celebrity.

What seems to be happening is a homogenization of the public realm, as all forms of public life dissolve into pure publicity and thus become indistinguishable from each other. And television is the major force behind this homogenization. Politics, business, religion, the military, sports, entertainment, the arts, academics—these are separate arenas in which men and women can make a contribution to the public good and achieve fame. TV-based celebrity in one area, however, increasingly provides access to the others. A politician can appear on an entertainment show (New York Mayor Giuliani hosting "Saturday Night Live"), a sports figure can be elected to political office (football star J. C. Watts in the House of Representatives), and just about anybody with any kind of name recognition can end up lecturing at an Ivy League university (George Stephanopoulos at Columbia).

The common element in all these cases is television—TV exposure in one area seems to spill over into TV exposure in another. In Ventura's case, Minnesota voters readily accepted Jesse's being seen on television with two of their best-known politicians because they were al-

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ready used to seeing him on television for other reasons.

The homogenizing power of television in American life stems from the way it has become the central medium through which all public figures get their message across, in fact the very medium in which they have their existence. Public life used to take place in separate spheres. To see a politician, one had to go to a political rally; to see a star athlete, one had to go to a sports arena; to see a popular entertainer, one had to go to a theater. Now one sees them all the same way—on TV.

Those separate public venues still exist, but their importance as real sites has been swamped by their importance as sites for television transmissions. Millions more see an important sports event on television than see it live at a ballpark or a stadium. Political rallies are now clearly staged for the benefit of cameras. Today to be a public figure is fundamentally to be someone who is seen on television, for whatever reason. It is not surprising therefore that the public has come to confuse one form of public life with another in a generalized sense of celebrity, which amounts to "I know him—I've seen him on TV."

We are entering a world in which everybody seems to be in a permanent state of playing to the camera.

The history of professional wrestling itself is a good illustration of the transformative power of television. Television and professional wrestling as we now know it were born together. Professional wrestling was virtually moribund when television came along to revive it in the 1950s. With lots of airtime to fill, early TV broadcasters were happy to show the carnival antics of the wrestlers, and promoters eagerly took advantage of the new exposure television gave them. But this symbiosis was still regarded as a relationship between two separate entities. The fiction remained that professional wrestling was a sport, with its own self-subsisting world, into which television occasionally gave us a glimpse.

The aim of televised matches was to get people to go to the arenas and pay to watch wrestling live. Indeed in the classic days of television and pro wrestling in the 1950s and '60s, fans generally managed to maintain a distinction between televised and live events. I knew many wrestling fans who deluded themselves into thinking it was only the matches shown on television that were fixed. If you went to the arena, you supposedly got to see the wrestlers go at each other for real. At the very least, fans believed the televised matches were somehow inferior to or less authentic than the "real" live matches.

Today everybody has abandoned the pretense that professional wrestling somehow exists independently of television. One of the two principal wrestling organizations, the WCW, has become a subsidiary of the Turner Broadcasting Network. Fans who still go to wrestling arenas find themselves watching much of the action on giant TVs. Indeed, in our era of mobile cameras, today's action quickly spills out of the ring, all the way to the back corridors of the stadium, the locker rooms, the parking lots, or wherever titanic brawls can break out that dwarf anything that could be shown in the ring. What start out as wrestling matches in arenas now often end up in local police headquarters, doctors' offices, hospitals, and other remote sites—whatever the fertile imaginations of the scriptwriters can dream up and the mobile TV cameras can show.

Television has gradually altered the nature of the wrestling events it originally seemed merely to be broadcasting. In the process, television has destroyed whatever shreds of authenticity the "sport" ever possessed. Roughly half of a television wrestling program now usually deals self-reflexively with the creation of the program itself. Inventive writers work up elaborate soap opera dramas, in which the wrestlers and the league ownership struggle over who gets to fight whom, and

Sidewalk Bubblegum © Clay Butler

Paul Cantor is professor of English at the University of Virginia.

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Life Under the Lens

For everyone who operates even at the margins of public life these days, there seems to be a monitor working at all times that asks: how is this going to sound, how is this going to play—not with whomever the person is purportedly dealing with, but rather with the great "out there."

I think this has had a kind of unnerving, unhinging effect on people. It has in lots of cases simply overwhelmed their sense of responsibility to the primary role they are meant to play.... As an example I would offer the O. J. Simpson trial.... Could anyone who watched any part of it doubt that it was equally a public pitch by prosecutors, defense lawyers, witnesses, and judge for the admiration of the watching audience, an effort to project some kind of dazzling personal image?

People who are rarely under the gaze of a television or other camera are hiring public-relations consultants to guide them in what to say and how to try to look and be perceived by that ever-watching, unknown audience. And often, even as they are doing something else...they will be viewing themselves on a split screen as they believe they are being seen by others.

—from an essay by Meg Greenfield in the Washington Post, *September 15, 1997*

the audience becomes more interested in how the wrestlers get into the ring than in what they do there.

In wrestling, very little of an authentic sport remained to resist being taken over by television. But many would argue that even in the case of "real" sports, like baseball, basketball, football, and hockey, the television tail has come to wag the athletic dog. Increasingly, the so-called authentic sports have begun to be shaped by the needs and demands of the television camera, as witness controversies over television time-outs, instant replay, and various forms of athletes' playing to the camera. There seems to be no phenomenon television has touched and left unaltered. Indeed, we are entering a world in which everybody seems to be in a permanent state of playing to the camera.

In the early days of Dick Clark's "American Bandstand," the first rule of being cool for the teenage dancers was never to acknowledge when they were on camera. One could in fact usually notice that a particular couple were aware the camera had panned onto them (their dancing became more animated), but they made every effort to pretend to be indifferent to it. Above all, they kept looking at each other and not at the camera. Not coincidentally, once Clark moved "American Bandstand" from Philadelphia to Los Angeles, the dancers' notion of what is cool completely reversed. Soon the dancers were mugging for the camera, hardly paying attention to their partners, and indeed reserving their loving glances and seductive moves not for each other but for the eye of the camera.

There is a troubling lesson in all of this. Clearly television has become a fundamental part of the fabric of modern living, and one can no longer master public life without having mastered television. But the history of television in all the areas it has invaded suggests that, rather than something to be mastered, it has a way of becoming master itself. That is why we must be wary as TV increasingly dominates American politics. People think they can use it as a tool but are often used by it instead. Now that Jesse Ventura has actually become governor of Minnesota, he has begun to play to the camera in a new way—to play the part of statesman, wearing suits, making judicious pronouncements, and generally mainstreaming himself. Some of his supporters now worry he will become part of the very system against which he led a rebellion. Ventura used television effectively to play the role of political outsider, but now the demands of television are forcing him to play the role of insider.

Having made his television reputation as "The Body," Ventura himself announced that his new political role required his transformation into "The Brain." His final TV campaign ad was in fact a brilliant image of Ventura in the pose of Rodin's *The Thinker.* Ventura has already allowed television to transform his image. "The Body" played very well on TV, perhaps because the body is the realm TV most easily deals with. How "The Brain" will play in Minnesota remains to be seen, but one thing we do know: When it is seen, it will be seen on television.

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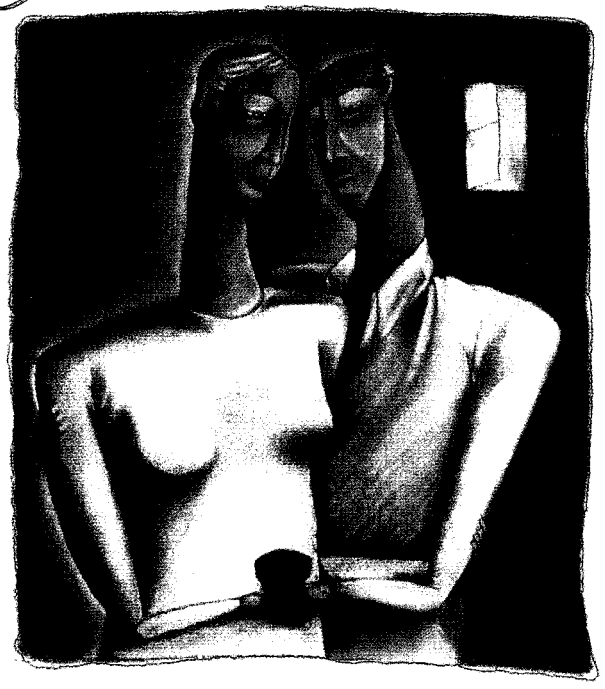
THE Ethics OF Human Cloning

JAMES Q. WILSON VS. LEON KASS



In a new book from AEI Press, two prominent social critics clash over a controversial technology that is likely to be tried with humans in the near future. Following is an edited excerpt from the debate between James Q. Wilson and Leon Kass. Wilson, emeritus professor at UCLA, is chairman of the American Enterprise Institute's Board of Academic Advisers. Kass, who holds an M.D. and a Ph.D. in biochemistry, is a Brady Fellow at AEI. The book-length exchange between these two men is available free from TAE as part of a special promotion—
see page 7.

JAMES Q. WILSON

"Family structure, not the method of reproduction, is what matters."

LIKE MOST PEOPLE, I instinctively recoil from the idea of cloning human beings. But we ought to pause and identify what in the process is so distressing. My preliminary view is that the central problem is not creating an identical twin but creating it without parents. Children born of a woman—however the conception is produced—will in the great majority of cases enjoy that special irrational affection that has been vital to human upbringings for millennia. If she is married to a man and they, like the great majority of married couples, invest energy, love, and commitment in the child, the child is likely to do well.

My argument is that the structure of the family a child is born into is more important than the sexual process by which the child is produced. If Leon Kass and other opponents of cloning think that sexuality is more important than families, they should object to any form of assisted reproduction that does not involve parental coition. Many such forms now exist. Children are adopted by parents who did not give them birth. Artificial insemination produces children without sexual congress. Some forms of such insemination rely on sperm produced by a man other

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than the woman's husband, while other forms involve the artificial insemination of a surrogate mother who will relinquish the baby to a married couple. By *in vitro* fertilization, eggs and sperm can be joined in a Petri dish and then transferred into the woman's uterus.

I have mixed views about assisted reproduction. Some forms I endorse, others I worry about, still others I oppose. The two principles on which my views rest concern, first, the special relationship between infant and mother that is the product of childbirth, however conception was arranged, and second, the great advantage to children that comes from growing up in an intact, two-parent family.

PLANNING TO HAVE A MOVIE STAR, BASKETBALL PLAYER, OR HIGH-ENERGY PHYSICIST AS AN OFFSPRING.

—JAMES Q. WILSON

Assisted reproduction, whether by artificial insemination or *in vitro* fertilization, is now relatively common. In none of those cases is the child the result of marital sex. And in some cases the child is not genetically related to at least one parent. I am aware of no study that shows *in vitro* fertilization to have harmed the children's mental or psychological status or their relationships with parents. A study in England compared children conceived by *in vitro* fertilization, or by artificial insemination with sperm from an unknown donor, with children who were sexually conceived and grew up in either birth or adoptive families. By every measure of parenting, the children who were the product of either an artificial fertilization or insemination by a donor did better than children who were naturally conceived. The better parenting should not be surprising. Those parents had been struggling to have children; when a new technology made it possible, they were delighted, and that delight motivated them to be especially supportive of their offspring.

Some observers are opposed to all of these arrangements, no matter what their effect on children. Paul Ramsey argued in 1970 that for any third party—say, an egg or sperm donor—to be involved violates the marriage covenant. That is also the view of the Roman Catholic Church. My view is different: If the child is born of a woman who is part of a two-parent family, and both parents work hard to raise him or her properly, we poor mortals have done all that man and God might expect of us.

Matters become more complex when a surrogate mother is involved. There, a woman is inseminated by a man so that she may bear a child to be given to another couple. That process uses a woman's body from the start for purposes against which her own instincts, as well as our own moral judgments, rebel.

The case of Baby M in New Jersey began with a child born to Mary Beth Whitehead. She had entered into a contractual agreement with William and Elizabeth Stern to deliver the child to them. Mrs. Whitehead had become pregnant through artificial fertilization by Mr. Stern's sperm. After the baby's birth, Mrs. Whitehead refused to surrender it; the Sterns sued. The judge decided that the contract should be honored and the baby should go to the Sterns. On appeal, the New Jersey Supreme Court decided unanimously that the contract was invalid but gave the baby to Mr. Stern and allowed Mrs. Whitehead visiting rights.

The contract, according to the court, was void because it illegally used money to procure a child. More importantly, because no woman can truly give informed consent to relinquishing an infant she has not yet borne and seen, Mrs. Whitehead had not entered into a valid contract. At that time, and so far as I know even today, in every state but Wyoming no woman can agree to allowing her child to be adopted unless that agreement is ratified after birth.

Why, then, did the court give the child to Mr. Stern? The court did not like Mrs. Whitehead. She was poor, ill-educated, moved frequently, received public assistance, and was married to an alcohol abuser. To me, Mrs. Whitehead's condition was largely irrelevant. The central fact was that she was the baby's mother. The overwhelming body of biological and anthropological evidence supports the view that women become deeply attached to their children. The mother-child bond is one of the most powerful in nature and is essential to the existence, to say nothing of the health, of human society.

The child belonged to its mother, period. That does not mean that all forms of surrogate mothering are wrong, but it at least means that the buyer of the surrogate's services is completely at risk. Given that risk, surrogate motherhood will never become popular, but it will occur in some cases.

I favor limiting cloning to intact, heterosexual families and placing sharp restrictions on the source of the eggs. We do not want families planning to have a movie star, basketball player, or high-energy physicist as an offspring. But I confess I am not clear as to how those limits might be drawn, and if no one can solve that puzzle, I would join Kass in banning cloning. Perhaps the best solution is a kind of screened lottery akin to what doctors performing *in vitro* fertilization now do with donated sperm. One can match his race or ethnicity and even select a sex, but beyond that he takes his chances.

I am persuaded that if only married couples can clone, and if we sharply limit the sources of the embryo they can implant in the woman, cloning will be quite rare. Sex is more fun than cloning, and artificial insemination and *in vitro* fertilization preserve the element of genetic chance that most people, I think, favor. Dr. Kass is right to stress the mystery and uncertainty of sexual union. That is why hardly any woman with a fertile husband who could obtain sperm from a donor bank will do so. Procreation is a delight.

LEON KASS

"Cloning turns procreation into manufacture."

WILSON BEGINS, AS I DO, with repugnance. He acknowledges his own instinctive recoil from the idea of human cloning but does not quite trust his sense of moral disquiet, and sets out to reason it away. That places the burden of proof on those who object to cloning rather than on the proponents. Worse, it re-

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quires that the reasons offered be finally acceptable to utilitarians who measure only in terms of tangible harms and benefits but who are generally blind to the deeper meanings of things.

Wilson uses the social acceptance of *in vitro* fertilization to rebut objections against laboratory conception of human life. But by removing human conception from the human body and by introducing new partners in reproduction (scientists and physicians), *in vitro* fertilization did more than supply what one or both bodies lack to produce an infant. By putting the origin of human life literally in human hands, it began a process that would lead, in practice, to the increasing technical mastery of human generation and, in thought, to the continuing erosion of respect for the mystery of sexuality and human renewal. The very existence of *in vitro* fertilization, notwithstanding its real benefits, becomes a justification for the next steps in turning procreation into manufacture. The arrival of cloning, far from gaining legitimacy from the precedent of *in vitro* fertilization, should instead awaken those who previously saw no difficulty with starting human life in Petri dishes.

EVEN IF HUMAN CLONING IS RARELY UNDERTAKEN, A SOCIETY IN WHICH IT IS TOLERATED IS NO LONGER THE SAME SOCIETY—ANY MORE THAN IS A SOCIETY THAT PERMITS INCEST OR CANNIBALISM OR SLAVERY ON EVEN A SMALL SCALE.

—LEON KASS

Wilson does profess sympathy with those who think cloning is contrary to nature, but nature's normative pointings have become invisible to him. Here is probably the biggest philosophical reason for our difference.

At the center of my objection to cloning is my belief in the profundity of sex. At the center of Wilson's is the concern that all children have parents. But the fact is we will be increasingly incapable of defending the institution of marriage and the two-parent family if we are indifferent to its natural grounding in sex. Can we ensure that all children will have two parents if we ignore the natural sexual foundations of parenthood?

Cloning is asexual reproduction. A clone is the twin rather than the offspring of its "source." It has no parents, biologically speaking, unless its "parents" are the mother and father of the person from whom it was cloned.

Wilson is willing to define motherhood solely by the act of giving birth. And if the clone's birth mother is married, her husband will be, by (social) definition, its father. In that way Wilson tries to give a virtually normal biparental identity to this radically aparental child, but in doing so Wilson clings to nature and the natural facts of gestation and parturition as his anchor. For that reason he argues elsewhere for a ban on the laboratory growth of a "newborn" child from sperm to term: "Without human birth, the parents' attitude toward the infant would be deeply compromised."

By playing down cloning's psychological problems of identity and individuality, Wilson is able to treat it as an innocent prospect. But there are unique dangers in mixing the twin relationship with the parent-child relationship. Virtually no parent is going to be able to treat a clone of himself or herself as one does a child generated by the lottery of sex. The new life will constantly be scrutinized in relation to that of the older copy. Even where undue parental expectations on the clone (say, to live the same life, only without its errors) are avoided, the child is likely to be ever a curiosity. Moreover, clones, because they are the flesh and blood (and the look-alike) of only one parent, are likely to be especially implicated in tensions between the parents. In the event of a divorce, will mommy still love the clone of daddy?

Wilson is also naive in believing that cloning can be confined to married couples seeking a remedy for childlessness. *In vitro* fertilization has not been so restricted; single women now regularly use artificial insemination with donor sperm. Commercial sperm banks are thriving, including those that specialize in eugenics (by providing only sperm from "geniuses"). Couples interested in cloning, especially those who have figured out the dangers of self-cloning, will certainly want to make use of "high-class" donor nuclei. Cloning provides the powerful opening salvo in the campaign to exercise control over the quality of offspring. The dangerous attitude that sees children as products for manipulation rather than gifts to be treasured will be further accelerated.

Given the fracture of the once-respected and solid bonds among sex, love, procreation, and stable marriage, and the relentless march of technology, it will prove impossible to preserve Wilson's faint hopes for limiting cloning to the sphere of traditional parenthood and family life. The right to reproduce (or not) is now widely regarded as a right belonging to individuals: Who are Wilson and I to stand in the way of any unmarried woman's desire for personal fulfillment through motherhood of a clone?

The right to reproduce is also being expanded to include a right to the type of child one wishes. Parents already exercise some choice, through genetic screening, over the quality of their children. Strange requests are already being voiced. Lobbyists for the congenitally deaf are seeking to abort non-deaf fetuses as part of their campaign to "normalize" deafness and to provide only deaf children for the deaf. Gay rights organizations urged the National Bioethics Advisory Commission to declare in favor of cloning. Some advocates even argued that, should homosexuality be shown to have a genetic basis, homosexuals would have an obligation to reproduce through cloning to preserve their kind!

Even if human cloning is rarely undertaken, a society in which it is tolerated is no longer the same society—any more than is a society that permits incest or cannibalism or slavery on even a small scale. It is a society that has forgotten how to shudder, that rationalizes away the abominable. A society that allows cloning has, whether it knows it or not, tacitly said yes to converting procreation into fabrication, and to treating our children as pure projects of our will.

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Why Jews Should Pray for a Christian America

BY RABBI DANIEL LAPIN

I am an Orthodox rabbi, the son of a famous Orthodox rabbi, and the brother of two more. My teachers were the great scholars who headed the Gateshead Talmudic Academy in England, and I studied for many additional years at the theological academy of Kfar Hassidim in Israel. Although I often fall short, I do my best to live my life and raise my children according to the laws of the five books of our holy Torah, and the customs of Moses and of Israel.

Because it is so unusual these days for a rabbi to say nice things about Christians, I consider it necessary to explain that I am not now, nor have I ever been, a Christian. I profess no special expertise of the books known as the New Testament. Being infatuated with Judaism and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, I dedicate my study time to Jewish theology.

I am heir to a faith that has produced the longest-lasting, continuous culture in the history of the world. I am also an American. And it is Christianity that has been responsible for, among other things, the founding of America, and its flowering into the greatest civilization the world has ever known. It is my fervent belief that America has been blessed as a place for Jews to live not in *spite* of the deep-seated Christian beliefs of most Americans, but *because* of them. It is also my great concern that all Americans—including Jews—are endangered by a weakening of Christianity in our society today. I say all this even though as an Orthodox Jew, there are lots of ways I don't easily fit into American culture.

In defending Christianity in America, I am not suggesting that Jews ought to embrace the Christian faith. I believe that all Jews should actively embrace traditional Judaism, and I have spent many years of my life helping to bring that about. But at the very least, Jews should stop speaking and acting as if Christian America is their enemy. All Americans who love freedom, whether they are religious or not, should be reassured rather than frightened by the reawakening of earnest Christianity throughout our land. What Jews as well as other minorities ought to fear most is not a Christian America but a *post*-Christian America.

Very little tells us as much about a culture as its view of the transcendent questions of life. A culture's prospects for success and durability are best revealed by examining what it considers the purpose of life, what is death, how sex should be treated, and similar questions that most of us answer in one of only two ways. Either we consult the traditions of our faith, or, rejecting faith, we seek self-satisfying answers.

It is primarily through religion that people learn to be considerate of others, to be self-denying and to curb their appetites, to be respectful of innocent life. Simple reasoning, emotion, and calculation of personal interest will often spur citizens into indulgent and, ultimately, dangerous kinds of behavior. So when religious lessons are no longer taught, and religious sanctions no longer maintained, various forms of ugly and disordered social life can quickly emerge. That is not good for a nation. And history shows us it can be deadly for Jewish minorities.

I am perfectly at ease recognizing that America is primarily a Christian nation. In fact, I am grateful for the country's Christian foundation, because it is that religious foundation that has made it possible for Jews to live in safety and security in this country for over 200 years.

The things that most threaten the life, liberty, and happiness of American Jews today are the very same things that confront other Americans. We are bothered by how stressful and perilous modern life has become. Many of the social institutions on which Jews depend for our safety and tranquillity—stable families, the police, the courts, public schools—are failing. And this is due not to too much Christianity but rather to the failures of secular liberalism.

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AMERICA HAS BEEN BLESSED AS A PLACE FOR JEWS TO LIVE NOT IN SPITE OF THE DEEP-SEATED CHRISTIAN BELIEFS OF MOST AMERICANS, BUT BECAUSE OF THEM.

Most of our current social pathologies and signs of civic disarray can be traced to one source: the extirpation of religion from American public life during the past three and a half decades. American Jews, like other Americans, suffer from the crimes, moral decay, and other pathologies that afflict our urban areas. Jews are not being raped, robbed, murdered, or mugged by Christians on the way home from church on Sunday morning, but rather by irreligious nihilists. Jews and religious Christians are natural moral allies. It is Christian conservatives who possess the political muscle to help restore many of the traditional qualities of public life upon which the security of Jews and indeed of all Americans ultimately depends.

In America today I have access to everything I require in order to observe my religion fully. Not only can I follow all the tenets of my faith, but I can even wear my *kippah* (religious head covering) when addressing Congress, because there is a deep respect for religious practice in this country. Most Americans go out of their way to accommodate religious needs.

You may point an accusing finger at me and say, "Well and good, but as a Jew you are at least part of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Were you, for example, a Sikh, you wouldn't be so quick to defend a Christian America." Actually, I believe that a Sikh, and my Muslim friends, as well as my atheist acquaintances, are all better off in a Christian America so far as the important things are concerned. They and their families are physically safer. They have more opportunities to prosper and support themselves. Their ability to follow their conscience and worship according to their faith (or not to worship at all) is more solid. All thanks to America's Christian heritage.

In allying myself with religious Christians on so many issues, I am often assaulted with two questions. Aren't I afraid that America will turn into a Christian theocracy? If the Christian Right gains more political power, won't it be harder to live as a Jew in this country?

The notion that the religious liberties of America's Jews are threatened by the rise of the religious conservatives makes little sense. Keep in mind that to observant Jews, religious liberty means some rather specific things. For instance, it means having the freedom to slaughter animals for meat in accordance with the biblical rules for *Kashruth*—the Jewish dietary laws. It means being free to circumcise our baby boys eight days after their birth, just as God commanded Abraham. It means the ability to observe our Sabbath rather than being forced to go to work or school on Saturday.

There are people who find such practices highly offensive, but most assaults on the religious freedoms of Jews come from the secular Left, not from the religious Right. In the atheistic Soviet Union, Jews were forced to work on Saturday. In the socialist paradise of Sweden, there have recently been assaults (led by animal rights activists) on ritual slaughter. Circumcision is also under attack from the Left, in Britain, America, and other places.

Throughout Jewish history, though never in America, each of these religious practices has been outlawed at one or more times. As a Jew I am extremely grateful to be living in a country that, though founded without one Jewish signature on its Declaration of Independence, has legally granted me full religious expression. But I am worried that my grandchildren may not have the same freedoms—not because of Christians, but because of a removal of Christian values from this country.

Contrary to what is commonly believed, traditional Jews are frequently received with greater respect by religious Christians than by secular Jews. In June 1997, I was one of the guest speakers at a Catholic homeschooling convention in Washington State. In the literature mailed out to participants an interesting note followed the paragraph detailing my topic. It requested female members of the audience to refrain from extending a handshake to me, as religious Jews reserve physical contact between the sexes, even of the most innocuous type, for close relations such as spouses or siblings. Other Orthodox Jewish speakers throughout the country have mentioned to me, and I have myself experienced, the great efforts expended by Christian groups to acquire kosher food for their Jewish guests. By contrast, the same speakers at a Jewish Federation event, at least until very recently, were often left with nothing to eat as the establishment Jews downed their non-kosher dinners.

Can I promise that no demagogue will ever rise in the Christian community, or that there will never be church-sponsored hatred of Jews in America? No, I cannot. I can only look at what is, and attempt to see what may hatch from eggs that have already been laid. At the moment, Christian conservatives are among the most philo-Semitic citizens of this country. Their sensitivity to Judaism is increasing, not diminishing, each year.

I know that few Jews realize this. Those of us who have spent the time getting to know the leaders and platforms of Christians do. What is absolutely irrefutable is that founding a theocracy would entail abrogating the First Amendment to the Constitution as well as pulling together a coalition of groups that have serious theological differences with one another. In other words, the chances are infinitesimal. In my eyes, this is much less likely to occur than prohibitions against Orthodox Jewish religious practices in the name of left-wing political correctness.

That is why this rabbi enthusiastically endorses the Christian conservative moment. Though I am not a Christian, I recognize that the prosperity and security of America—and *all* of its people—depend upon its retaining the moral fiber of its Christian founding.

Rabbi Daniel Lapin, founder of the national Jewish organization Toward Tradition, is author of the new book America's Real War.

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In Real Life

FIRST-PERSON AMERICA

THE VIEW'S GREAT FROM UP HERE

By David Friedman

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA—Crossing a mid-winter stream, I start up the Mount Wilson Toll Road, one of Southern California's most demanding mountain bike routes. A nine-mile, 4,600-foot climb to the summit, I think, is the perfect way for an aging baby boomer to celebrate both a birthday and the New Year.

Carved by hand into a mountain so rugged it once frustrated the likes of celebrated conservationist John Muir, the Toll Road is all about aspiration. It started as a logging trail in the 1860s, but as recreation-minded immigrants settled Pasadena and its environs, a company was formed to operate the route for a toll of a quarter per hiker and 50 cents per horse.

In 1903, George Hale, an Ivy League astronomer, climbed the Toll Road in search of a solar observatory site. A stunningly blue sky broke through the June haze. Entranced by the astounding clarity, and undaunted by the mountain's remoteness and often-heavy snows, Hale vowed to build on the summit.

In December 1907, after using mules and a bizarre electric-powered truck to haul 150 tons of equipment up the Toll Road, Hale aimed a mammoth 60-inch telescope, then the world's largest, at the heavens. A 100-inch reflecting scope, still an engineering marvel today, came a decade later. Mount Wilson was the center of global astronomy for the next 30 years, and from its peak we first confirmed the existence of galaxies other than our own.

Far less elevated matters fill my mind when I puff into Henniger Flats, a shady oasis about a third of the way up the trail. After a quick drink I turn right, away from the mountain's exposed face. Suddenly, I feel like I'm in Canada. A scant four miles from paved road, I'm riding through a leafy land of deer, birds, and squirrels, framed by sweet-scented pines.

Los Angeles is a region of surprise. As I pedal in the morning chill, California's economic momentum has, against all odds, recovered from the rain of calamities that descended on the region at the beginning of this decade: an earthquake, the Rodney King riots, the collapse of defense manufacturing at the end of the Cold War, the morale-busting O. J. Simpson trial, all broadcast around the country along with our wildfires and mud slides.

THIS SORT OF TURNAROUND IS SOMETHING THAT AMERICANS TAKE FOR GRANTED, BUT IN MOST OTHER COUNTRIES SUCH A RECOVERY WOULD BE HAILED AS A MINOR MIRACLE.

For a few years these events had Southern California reeling. Thousands of residents pulled up stakes for other locales. Today, however, greater Los Angeles is producing more than three times as many jobs as the state's celebrated Silicon Valley. For the first time in six years, more Americans are moving into Southern California than leaving.

With remarkable speed and flexibility, California found new strengths, and carved a new path forward. This sort of turnaround is something that Americans take for granted, but in most other countries such a recovery would be hailed as a minor miracle.

Thoughts of steep challenges and turnarounds of a different sort fill my mind as I clear the forest portion of my ride. The Toll Road deteriorates into deep sand, granite, and gravel, my least favorite riding surface. My tires bog down and bounce wildly as they crash among the rocks.

Many panicked when the wheels almost came off of previously unstoppable Los Angeles in the 1990s. The region's traditional optimism gave way to sullen despair, deepened by an intelligentsia that exaggerated negative news in order to prove our unredeemable business, institutional, and social failings.

Crises of faith may be the greatest vulnerabilities that prosperous Americans now face. When the next challenge comes—and amidst today's plenty and peace we need to recognize that painful episodes will surely visit again in the future—will we remember how wrong the prophets of doom turned out to be last time?

The trail finally improves as I pass a signpost marking the last mile to the top. I can see the broadcast antennae sprouting from where a hotel once stood that sheltered families who trudged up the Toll Road for special observatory lectures and a chance to peer through the 60-inch telescope.

I tackle a steep, brief but nasty spur road—and I've made it! I stop at the sum-

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mit and ponder the roller coaster route I've just climbed, and the city beyond.

What I see is a dynamic region, perched at one edge of the most dynamic nation in world history—a society that approaches the millennium with an indomitable culture and enviable economy. Quite a feeling for a 42-year-old office worker peering over what once, not too long ago, was only desert.

David Friedman is a columnist for the L.A. Downtown News.

ONLY IN A SMALL TOWN

By Hendrik Mills

HARLEM, MONTANA—It is tempting when someone in a larger community offers me or my wife a job. Our town of about 900 people does not offer dancing lessons or the symphony or intensive magnet schools or rhythm and blues or a Thai restaurant. And career ladders are short.

Even the (part-time) mayor doesn't feel too awfully important in a town of this size, and the lure of bigger, more prestigious places and jobs is sometimes strong. Our children are bright (we think). So why stick around an area where the high schools don't seem to have heard of computer programming, and nobody knows what tofu is?

Well, let me tell you a little story about Vonnie Klungland and the Montana Power Company. A year and a half ago we bought a house in town and moved here from the Indian reservation four miles away, where we had been renting. To change the gas and electric billing, I called the Montana Power office in Havre, which is 45 miles west of our town. A woman's voice answered, "Montana Power. Vonnie speaking."

I had heard that a member of our church, Vonnie Klungland, worked in Havre at Montana Power; so I exclaimed, "Hi, Vonnie, this is Hendrik!"

"Well, hello. How do you like your new house?"

"It's really a good house. I'm glad we bought it."

"You want your billing changed over to the new place, don't you?"

"That's right; you guessed it."

HE KNEW TO WHOM MY WIFE WAS MARRIED, WHERE I WORKED, WHICH CAR I DROVE TO WORK, AND THE FACT THAT IT WOULD INEVITABLY BE UNLOCKED.

"Do you still want it in your wife's name?"

"Please."

"Okay, I'll take care of it. See you later."

I hung up the phone, and later realized that I hadn't had to give the address of the house we were moving from, our new address, my own last name, or my wife's, which is different from mine. The transfer of accounts went off without a hitch.

Normally, when one buys mail-order items to be shipped via UPS, one must give a street address. But that's not how it works around here. One day, as I was working in a local repair garage, I was approached by the UPS man, a fixture in town, who told me, "I put a package for your wife in your car." The package had been addressed to my wife's workplace on the reservation, but he didn't want to waste time going through the receptionist there. He knew to whom my wife was married, where I worked, which car I drove to work, and the fact that it would inevitably be unlocked.

In the same vein, a man working as a hired hand for a local farmer stopped his grain truck in front of the repair garage and came in to see me. "Your wife left the lights on in the van," he informed me. Our house is near the edge of town, and he could see the van's lights as he made a turn toward the grain storage bins. I put my tools down, drove home, and sure enough my wife had left her lights burning.

Two or three times, we've been careless at bedtime and left our garage door open with the lights on all night. The garage contains a car, lots of tools, bicycles, a mower, and other valuables. Nothing has ever been touched. Try that in a big city.

A pastor from the local Assembly of God church had car trouble recently. Pay for pastors in this area is not luxurious, and he and I have had some good talks about evolution, science, and religion. So when I heard about his problem, I suggested he bring his vehicle to our house one evening. He pulled the dead car over with the help of his father-in-law. It wasn't until Sunday that I got around to looking at it; it needed an ignition module. Since I knew that Todd, an employee of the local parts store, worked weekends at the motel, I called there, and when things were slow at the motel an hour later, Todd drove over and unlocked the parts store for us. It turned out that he had to order the part. It came in a couple of days later, and after the car was running, the preacher asked what he owed me. "How about $20 credit at the bakery?" I suggested, knowing that it was owned by a couple who belong to this church. He agreed, thanked me, and drove off.

Last weekend I found that a friend's car, which had over 100,000 miles on it, badly needed spark plugs and an air filter. I called Rich, the manager of the parts store, at home. He told me to meet him at the store in five minutes. Both he and his wife showed up. Not only did he sell me what I needed, but he allowed me to charge it to my friend's account based on nothing but my word.

We had guests planned for dinner tonight, but our children, ages 11, six, and five, wanted to see a movie. So I dropped them all off in front of the local theater. Through the glass front doors, I could see the manager, Mrs. Simanton, greeting the children and then waving to me as I pulled away from the curb. I know her, her husband, her two grown sons, and where their farm is; she knows where we live and work. That's why I didn't worry about my kids tonight.

Listening to conversations in this small community, I'm reminded again and again that those who live here have a treasure. They fully appreciate that, and are working hard—like lots of other Americans in small towns— to nourish and protect it.

Hendrik Mills recently changed jobs from auto mechanic to teacher; his wife is a physician.

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Social Security Watch

TRACKING THE NEXT BIG WASHINGTON REFORM

Private Retirement Accounts Would Be Good for Families

While most conservatives support Social Security privatization, a few remain cool to the idea. They worry that individually owned accounts might be less beneficial to stay-at-home moms, orphaned children, and traditional families.

"Any privatization plan that makes benefits dependent on lifetime contributions by a payroll worker would leave [widows and orphans] out in the cold," wrote Gary Bauer, president of the Family Research Council, in a January 1997 *New York Times* op-ed piece.

"While the folks in Peoria may not be able to articulate why, the [Social Security] program remains an American icon like baseball, hot dogs, and apple pie," writes John Mueller, former economic advisor to Jack Kemp, in the November-December 1998 issue of *Family Policy.* "Conservatives, therefore, ought to think twice before privatizing Social Security, considering it may be the last institution in America to embody some very traditional, family-oriented ideals."

Let's set aside the notion that centrally planned transfer-payment programs are traditional and pro-family. The fundamental flaw in statements like the above is the assumption that today's Social Security system will support housewives better than will individual accounts.

Social Security's dismal returns offer little hope to *any* recipient, especially young people just starting families. According to *Stocks, Bonds, Bills and Inflation*, the U.S. stock market produced average real annual returns of 7.6 percent between 1926 and 1996. Social Security Administration figures, meanwhile, show that a one-earner couple making the minimum wage would see a 3.75 percent average annual return on FICA payments. A traditional single-earner couple making $65,400 (the maximum Social Security-taxable income) would see returns of just 1.3 percent on their Social Security taxes. Because of the intractable demographic realities facing this system, future retirees can plan on *negative* returns.

In April 1997, Third Millennium—a New York-based advocacy group on whose national board I serve—asked economists William Even of Ohio's Miami University and David Macpherson of Florida State University to study seven non-Social Security retirement plans (such as the Ohio State Teachers Retirement System) in which 1,111,147 public employees participated. These funds illustrate the real-life advantages of investing one's pension contributions in capital markets rather than social programs.

Thanks to its "spousal benefit" provisions, Social Security provides a single-earner couple with retirement benefits 50 percent higher than a single person with the same lifetime earnings. Nonetheless, in all seven of the private-investment systems studied by Even and Macpherson, such a couple would be better off outside Social Security. Had the husband started work at age 25 and earned a $40,000 salary upon retirement at 65, for example, even the *worst-performing* fund would pay him $35,445 annually, versus Social Security's $19,814. Also, non-FICA systems permit earlier retirement, giving husbands and wives more golden years together.

In his article "The Perils of Privatization," Mueller notes that "Social Security also pays a widow's benefit equal to 100 percent of the husband's basic benefit, as well as generous coverage for surviving children." But the Third Millennium study shows that a surviving widow on Social Security would get payments $15,631 lower than she would have earned from the *most poorly* invested private retirement fund.

As for surviving children, a market-based mechanism already exists for securing their financial well-bring. It's called life insurance. A privatized Social Security system could require individuals with dependent spouses and children to carry life insurance. Term coverage is widely available at reasonable prices to people of child-rearing age. Disability insurance could likewise be required, for less than the 1.7 percent federal disability levy now deducted from all U.S. paychecks (official projections show this tax rising to 2.4 percent by 2030). Free-marketeers might object to a federal insurance mandate, but it would be preferable to today's system of socialized care.

Social conservatives should also recognize that Social Security has unlinked family members from each other, and that socialized pension systems subtly erode parental self-interest in rearing competent and loyal children. "With the state as support system," notes Jennifer Morse in a recent issue of *Forbes*, "People who never have productive children themselves can anticipate the collective support of other people's children instead."

Pro-family skeptics overlook another key benefit of personal retirement accounts: inheritance. A worker cannot bequeath a penny of his Social Security benefits to his adult children. If he dies without collecting anything from the taxes he paid in, tough luck.

Private accounts would reverse this. Parents could hand down the ample nest eggs they accumulate during their careers. Under such a system, every child would have a powerful incentive to honor his father and mother.

Now *that* sounds like a pro-family policy worth enacting.

— Deroy Murdock

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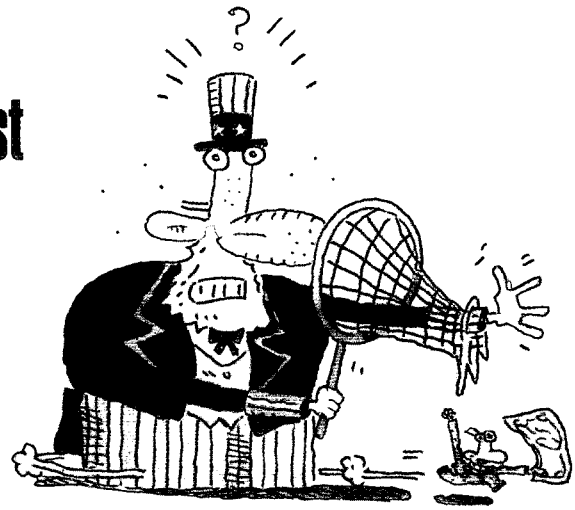
the Tax Economist



Fantasy Taxation

Is the Best Tax None?

By Kevin Hassett

If you have been watching the tax reform debate for many years, you might have the impression that economists generally agree that a flat tax like that proposed by Steve Forbes is the optimal or most efficient tax system. That's understandable, but wrong. Economists who study the theory of taxation are in virtually unanimous agreement that there *is* one optimal tax system, but it's something even simpler than a flat tax. The optimal tax is *no* tax.

Where does such a conclusion come from? First, a little background. Taxation is necessary to finance government spending. But whenever you tax things you change people's activities. Tax investment income, for example, and people will save less and spend more.

In order to study the effects of taxation, mathematical economists set up complicated models based on the behavior of real people that allow them to evaluate the distortions caused by a wide variety of hypothetical tax policies. Using such models, they then address the question: "For a given size of government, how can I construct a tax system that minimizes the negative effects of taxes on the economy?" To be as realistic as possible, the models look at the effects of different tax policies over many years, so that even subtle effects on economic behavior can be allowed to compound.

These exercises are purely hypothetical—the equivalent among economists of the fantasy baseball games that some people play on paper, where Ted Williams and Roger Clemens can star on the same team, and real-life obstacles are temporarily suspended. But it's interesting that when these optimal-tax models are put into motion, the solution coming out the other end as being most efficient is clear: Have government start today with a relatively efficient tax mechanism like a flat tax, and use it to raise more revenue than is required to finance current government spending. Allow the surpluses to gradually build over time. After a number of years, the government accumulates a big enough endowment that it can finance itself in perpetuity with just the interest on this surplus. At that point, the government sets all tax rates to zero, sends the tax collectors home, and stops distorting the economy with its levies.

While the surpluses are accruing, there is a bigger distortion than would occur if a flat tax was used simply to raise enough for one year's worth of spending. But the long run gains of eventually getting rid of taxes altogether dwarf these extra losses. A little additional work on our part today frees our children and grandchildren from even knowing what a tax collector is tomorrow.

Anyone who has tried to plan his finances to fund an early retirement can understand where such a result comes from. Saving aggressively and working overtime up front can, by the miracle of compound interest, create a big financial payoff down the road.

But of course, when applied to government this is a completely theoretical exercise. For one problem, where is the government going to *park* a cushion of savings big enough to fund all public spending just from its interest? Presumably in private stocks and bonds, where the money would go to work and throw off the necessary dividends. But that would make the government the dominant force in our equity markets—a recipe for all sorts of manipulation and mischief. ("...I demand that we pull all public investments out of companies that don't provide at least 5 percent of their jobs to left-handed Hopi Indians...")

Further, it's impossible to imagine a political mechanism that could prevent politicians from frittering away surpluses instead of treating them as untouchable, to be saved for an endowment. The fancy mathematical models assume that government spending will be limited and solely in the interest of the taxpayer, which clearly is unrealistic. One shudders to think what might happen if 20 years from now, with trillions of dollars in the Washington piggybank, a charismatic president with an activist agenda were paired with a sympathetic congress.

In the real world, attempts to devise an optimal tax policy must account for the proclivities of politicians, and with that in mind it's probably better to try to raise just enough money to cover the cost of government each year. Then if government starts wasting money it must raise current taxes, which pains voters and kicks up a political ruckus, building in a natural check. With these realities in mind, a low flat tax may be the best we can do.

So why bother even thinking about theoretically optimal tax policies, premised as they are on an impossibly benevolent government? Several reasons. For one thing, optimal tax research spawns new thinking about how to raise revenues without wasting money. More generally, this research provides food for thought by highlighting the heavy economic prices we must pay simply because politicians can't be trusted.

Kevin Hassett is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.

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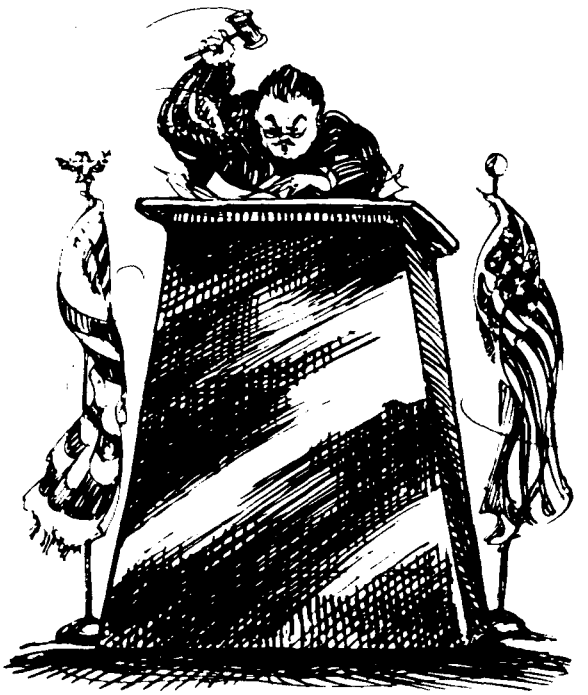
Enterprising

ON BUSINESS AS AN IMAGINATIVE ACT



Mark Steele/Laughing Stock

Horrors in the Courts

By Ralph Reiland

The latest news in the world of crazy lawsuits is that Pizza Hut has just been dragged through court as the perpetrator of a "hate crime." It all began on the Fourth of July weekend, 1995, in Godfrey, Missouri. Mary Ann Burton called in an order for six pizzas about an hour before the store's closing time.

Ms. Burton showed up with 16 family members from out of town. They were given their pizza, but no plates, utensils, or beverages. The soda machine, said the Pizza Hut employees, had already been turned off. What allegedly followed was a blink of the lights, an employee running the sweeper near the Burtons' tables, and a too-loud jukebox. Finally, on their way out, the Burtons claim they heard some name-calling and spotted an employee in the parking lot slapping a mop handle into his hand.

Most of us would probably view this incident as a case of bad service, perhaps a case of employees wanting to get out of the store promptly, especially on a holiday weekend. On a slow night, particularly in a chain restaurant where there's no owner within a hundred miles, that can easily translate into an early scrubbing of the Pepsi machine, employees turning up the jukebox while they're shutting down, and the running of a sweeper while customers are finishing up.

On this particular night, unfortunately, the incident turned into a federal case. The town of Godfrey, reported the Associated Press, is "mostly white," the Pizza Hut employees were white, and the Burtons are African Americans. In that milieu, Ms. Burton viewed the bad service as a bias crime. Further, she blamed the alleged racial discrimination on the employer, as if Pizza Hut weren't fighting to sell tomato pies and drinks to every soul on the planet, regardless of lineage.

"You can hate someone privately and it's your own business," Burton asserted, "but when you hate someone publicly, it becomes everyone's business." Everyone's business perhaps, but why is it Pizza Hut's liability? Especially in this age of declining manners, when we can't keep a lid on squalid conduct even in the Oval Office, one could reasonably ask how any company could be held liable for the coarse, unauthorized behavior that a bunch of teenagers brings into the workplace.

"We concluded there was absolutely no racial or discriminatory behavior involved, but our employees should have provided better service," said Pizza Hut. The company explained that it trains employees to treat customers and employees fairly and does not tolerate harassment. That, as it turned out, wasn't good enough for U.S. District Judge William Hart. In a precedent-setting decision, Hart rejected Pizza Hut's contention that the state's hate laws applied only to individuals and instead ruled that companies may be held liable if their employees commit "hate crimes." Following Hart's decision, Pizza Hut settled the case for an undisclosed amount.

The new owner of Pizza Hut, Tricon, is already acquainted with bizarre lawsuits. A couple of years ago, Kathy Brown went to a Kentucky Fried Chicken, which Tricon also owns, in Redondo Beach, California. Before Ms. Brown received her chicken, an armed robber entered the store, pressed his gun against her back and lifted her wallet. He then demanded that the KFC employee give him the cash in the register too, shoving his gun harder into Brown's back and threatening to shoot. The frightened cashier told the robber she would have to get the key from the back of the store. Brown screamed for the cashier to turn over the money and the cashier complied. Seconds later, it was over, with the robber and the cash gone and Brown unharmed.

Fortunate ending? Not quite. A year later, Brown sued, seeking damages for severe emotional distress—sued KFC, that is, not the criminal, who was never apprehended. A California appellate court accepted Brown's hypothesis, ruling that a company has a duty to comply with a robber's demands, and if it fails to do so promptly, injured (or frightened) patrons can sue for damages.

"The KFC decision is a potential disaster for restaurants, convenience stores, and shopkeepers," says Theodore J. Boutrous, an attorney in Washington, D.C., because it means they may be sued "for ruinous tort damages on the theory that they did not make the correct split-second judgment while they were themselves being victimized."

The bottom line? In less lawsuit-plagued times, Mary Ann Burton would have been satisfied with a sincere apology and a stack of gift certificates. And folks like Kathy Brown, escaping a close call, would be counting their blessings instead of dollar signs.

Ralph R. Reiland is associate professor of economics at Robert Morris College and owner of Amel's Restaurant in Pittsburgh.

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Flashback

TO KNOW NOTHING OF WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE YOU WERE BORN IS TO REMAIN EVER A CHILD—*Cicero*

Race Meets Politics on the American Frontier

Archive Photos

The genetic jury may still be out on Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings, but we don't need DNA detectives to determine whether a major figure of the Democratic Party of the 1830s—indeed, the Vice President of the United States—treated a black woman as his common-law wife and sired two children with her. He did it quite in the open, or as openly as mores would permit. And he even won the electoral votes of Mississippi and Alabama.

Richard Mentor Johnson was a Kentuckian who represented his state for more than 20 years in the House and Senate before serving as Martin Van Buren's Vice President from 1837-41.

As an infant, Johnson's cradle was struck by a lighted arrow fired by attacking Indians. A born Indian fighter, you might say, a trait that came in handy when war broke out in 1812. Congressman Johnson became Colonel Johnson and led 20 frontiersmen in a "forlorn hope" charge against the legendary Tecumseh at the Battle of theThames.

Fifteen of the 20 died in fierce battle; the badly wounded Johnson was smote in hip and thigh. An Indian rushed in to administer the *coup de grâce*, but Johnson calmly aimed, fired, and down went Tecumseh—or so Johnson's friends claimed. (His enemies had their doubts about the slain Indian's identity.)

A hero was born: an unreluctant hero who liked to tear open his shirt and show off his scars while on the stump. For the next 30 years his admirers sang "Rumpsey Dumpsey, Colonel Johnson shot Tecumseh." Simple, but then so was "I like Ike."

Johnson was a classic picturesque Jacksonian Democrat—with one difference. For as the *Louisville Journal* declared, "The plain truth is that Colonel Johnson is the husband of a mulatto."

Although officially a bachelor—miscegenation was against the law in Kentucky—Johnson's "mistress of the parlor" was his slave and lover, Julia Chinn. (Opponents charged that they were married *sub rosa*.) Richard and Julia had two daughters, Adaline and Imogene, whom he raised…well, like daughters. Both married white men and were given considerable properties, including Johnson's grand manor.

Johnson's domestic situation was common knowledge. An opposition newspaper in Trenton, New Jersey, nastily suggested that if the Colonel "expires in his wife's gentle embrace" his epitaph should read "Died in the Wool." The Washington *Spectator* predicted that a Johnson presidency would "be the means of an African jubilee…throughout the country." (Johnson, as a good Democrat, was no abolitionist, though he did emancipate many of his own slaves.)

Andrew Jackson was one Johnson mentor. Old Hickory, not exactly a *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?* race-mixer, knew all about Julia Chinn. In 1835, Tennessee Justice John Catron wrote Jackson, "The idea of voting for [Johnson] is loathed beyond anything," for Johnson "had endeavoured often to force his daughters into society." Moreover, Julia and the girls "rode in carriages, and claimed equality." Catron denied that "a lucky random shot, even if it did hit Tecumseh, qualifies a man for Vice President."

It was a bereft Johnson who was elected Vice President in 1836. Julia had died of cholera three years earlier. In 1836 daughter Adaline—"a source of inexhaustible happiness and comfort to me"—passed away. Johnson's love life became erratic: He took up with a beautiful mulatto slave, who ran off with an Indian. Thus spurned, he turned to her teenaged sister. A Kentucky Democrat fretted, "He seems happy, but how can he expect his friends to countenance and sustain him, when he lives in adultery with a buxom young Negro wench?"

The Democrats dumped Johnson after one term, although he still received 48 vice presidential electoral votes in 1840. He returned to his old Kentucky home, where he served in the state legislature and played the role of Retired Great Man.

In 1929, one Kentucky old-timer recollected the "Colonel Dick Johnson" he had known as a boy. "I reckon he was the most popular man in the county," declared Judge James Y. Kelly. "He was the most polite man I ever saw…Old Colonel Johnson had a mulatto wife…His colored daughters got all the education they wanted…I heard men say they were treated so well by Colonel Johnson."

The Vice President's biographer notes, "Had Johnson sold his children on the slave market, as many men did in that day, no political exception would have been taken to it." But instead he did the right and honorable thing. He loved Julia Chinn; he loved his daughters as daughters.

One hundred sixty years later, in these morally superior times, can you name a prominent white politician—let alone a Vice President—with a black wife and children?

—Bill Kauffman

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Hollywood Report

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King of Common Sense

Mike Judge created television's Beavis and Butt-Head, the two moronic MTV teens who strike fear in the hearts of orderly citizens everywhere. How can he also be the force behind "King of the Hill"—the animated comedy whose idea of poking fun at heartland rubes is to make viewers like them?

Judge, 36, who lives in Austin, Texas, spends much of his energy these days lampooning the sorts of liberal platitudes that college towns like Austin run on like rocket fuel. In his 1996 feature film *Beavis and Butt-Head Do America,* the character his protagonists most love to hate is a '60s peacenik turned high school teacher who makes his students sit Indian-style in a circle while he sings songs like "Lesbian Seagull" and ladles out New Age pieties.

And in a grand finale at the White House, Bill Clinton himself awards the misfits with honorary appointments in the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms.

"We're in the Bureau of Beer, Firearms, and Cigarettes. And maybe chicks, too," says Beavis.

Proclaims the Big He, "You exemplify a fine new crop of young Americans who will grow into the leaders of this great country."

Obviously it takes one to know one.

Judge has taken a different approach with "King of the Hill," the popular Fox cartoon series about a propane salesman, Hank Hill, and his family and friends in the fictional rural town of Arlen, Texas. Arlen is about as far from the locales of "Ally McBeal," "E.R.," and "Spin City" as one can get. Judge and his colleagues decided early on that the series would treat heartland America affectionately, rather than ridiculing it in the Hollywood tradition.

"We never want it to be the pseudo-sophisticated writer in Hollywood or New York laughing at these Middle-American folks," executive producer Richard Appel told me. "The goal is to have these Middle-American folks laughing at the pretensions and pseudo-sophistication of the types who might be out here writing about them. Hank is the last man on TV driven by common sense."

This approach results in portrayals that haven't been seen in prime time in ages. Take, for example, the episode on a subject near but quite undear to the hearts of many entertainment industry activists: Hunting.

The script has Hank's son Bobby going on his first deer hunt with Dad. It's a funny and very Texan rite of passage. "We received lots of letters from hunters who couldn't believe they saw a show that took a fair-minded approach to this," says Appel. "And we got some who said, 'I can't believe you showed a child hunting.'"

Fox publicists tout the political incorrectness of "King of the Hill." One press release says Hank is the voice of reason in a "world of incompetent sales clerks, meddling bureaucrats, and do-good liberals." The series was launched in 1997 with an episode about Hank going up against a government social worker. One recent installment had Hank grappling with the bureaucratic asininities growing out of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Another episode mocked self-absorbed, latte-quaffing soccer moms.

A show planned for next season will spoof the Band-Aid approach politicians often use against large, cultural problems like guns in schools: Hank, guest instructor for shop class, runs afoul of Zero Tolerance laws when he brings some of his tools to school. "We thought that would be a good moment for Hank to say, What's going on here? How come there's no room for individual attention to issues rather than blanket rules that sound right, but in application are absurd?" says Appel.

"King of the Hill" often seems to take its cues from a similar TV place: Mayberry, North Carolina. Even though Mayberry is fictional, the surrounding towns that Sheriff Andy Taylor and Aunt Bee are always talking about—Mount Pilot, Siler City, and Raleigh—actually exist. The producers of "King of the Hill" likewise placed Arlen in a real setting. "We observe the hours it would take to drive to Houston if Hank does that," says Appel.

And just as in Mayberry, where Barney Fife would wile away the time describing simple plans to go home, get a shower, and go over to Thelma Lou's, with Andy quietly listening, the writers of "King of the Hill" have no qualms about building a story around a discarded couch that Hank finds in the alley. "The guys don't know how to stand around it. Before you know it, they become very attached to it and put a canopy over it for shade. They put a beer holder there. Just the idea of sitting down, drinking beer outside, is this revelation," says Appel. "It's a very small, little story." And like most installments of the program, very humorous.

Judge has another project in the works for mid-February: a feature film with real people. Jennifer Aniston will star in the comedy about high-tech corporate culture and the often ludicrous management theories that regularly sweep that landscape. The father of "Beavis and Butt-Head" taking on Silicon Valley? As the idiots would say, "Heh-heh, heh-heh, heh-heh."

— John Meroney

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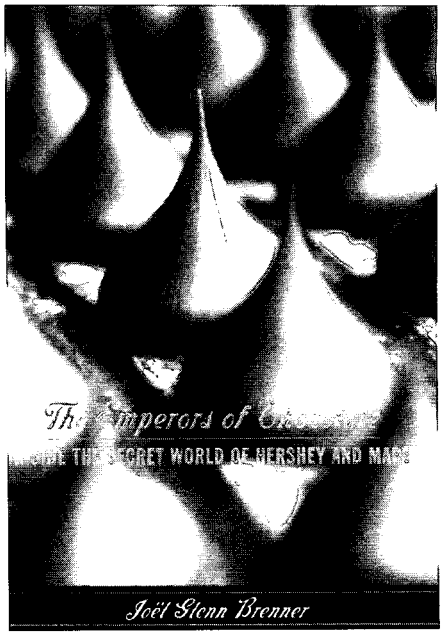
BookTalk



WILLIE WONKA THEY'RE NOT

By Richard Miniter

The Emperors of Chocolate
By Joel Glenn Brenner
Random House, 384 pages, $25.95

A tall, intense young man toured the legendary Hershey factory in August, 1939. As the other tourists headed off for the gift shop, he told the tour guide he wanted to see the president of the company. Excuse me? "Tell him Mars is here," he said. "That's all he needs to know."

Forrest Mars had created the Mars bar, the Three Musketeers bar, and a small fortune before he was 30 years old. But then he was cast out of the Mars empire he helped build and wandered Europe for several years. Many chocolate-makers thought and hoped that he was dead or broke. Then he showed up in Hershey, Pennsylvania, with the deal of the century.

When Mars was ushered into William Murrie's oak-paneled office, the Hershey president tried making small talk. Mars cut him off. "Your son Bruce, what's he up to these days? He out of college yet?"

Murrie was caught off guard. What did Mars want? Mars pulled a handkerchief out of his pocket and opened it on Murrie's desk. "Take a look."

Murrie saw a dozen colored candies that shined like jewels. Mars explained: "They're chocolates. I've had 'em in my pocket since I left New York. Try one."

Murrie tentatively picked one up and tasted it. "Murrie was impressed. A Hershey bar never would have withstood the train trip, not on a hot day like today. But Forrest's candies didn't seem to be affected by the heat," writes Joel Glenn Brenner in *The Emperors Of Chocolate*. Murrie immediately realized that Mars had done something impossible: candy that melts in your mouth, not in your hand.

Mars proposed an 80-20 partnership. Murrie's son, Bruce, would be the 20-percent partner. This appealed to Murrie; after decades in Milton Hershey's shadow, he wanted his son to have a chance to own his own business. In exchange, Hershey would provide the chocolate, the sugar, and some of the technology. The product was named after the two partners: Mars and Murrie, or M&Ms. It soon became the most profitable candy in the world.

The Hershey-Mars cooperation didn't last. Within a decade, Murrie left the M&M venture amid angry recriminations. After buying out his erstwhile partner, Mars vowed to replace Hershey as the number-one candy company in America—the beginning of one of capitalism's most bitter rivalries. To this day, Mars and Hershey are locked in a global struggle, just like Coke and Pepsi.

You can find many other anecdotes of this quality in Brenner's book—but not enough. *The Emperors of Chocolate* lags whenever the author meanders into other areas of the candy business, which she frequently does, and sprints whenever she takes us into the secret worlds of Mars and Hershey.

Certainly no writer has better credentials to write this book than Joel Glenn Brenner. While she was a *Washington Post* reporter she snared the only on-the-record interview with the famously reclusive Forrest Mars, Jr. In the past seven years, she has interviewed virtually everyone of consequence in the industry.

But like a compulsive candy eater who can't resist one more M&M, she cannot stop herself from telling us everything she knows about candy. Some of this is helpful, such as her chapter-long digression on the history of *chocolatl*, as the Aztecs called the famous bean. No detail is too small to escape her notice, though. She tells us the current color mixture of M&Ms ("Thirty percent brown, 20 percent red and yellow, and 10 percent orange, blue, and green."). She spends half of a page detailing the views of Hershey assembly-line workers on the changing color of their uniforms. She reveals the horrible working conditions of Hershey chocolate factories in the 1930s—"I never broke a finger, just bruised and smashed, but I know a lot of women who did," said one worker—but never tells us if the workers ever unionized or complained. At times, she is simply pasting her notes into the book's pages. Still, whenever she returns to the stories of Hershey and Mars, she is a captivating and perceptive writer of business and character.

A closer look at Hershey and Mars reveals how American business was transformed in the twentieth century, a larger point that Brenner overlooks. While both companies became global giants, these fierce competitors tell us something fundamental about America. One (Hershey) began as a utopian vision and soon became a publicly traded behemoth that survived largely by luck and size, while the other (Mars) was designed to be the cornerstone of a free market empire but ended up a private, family-owned company (one of

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the largest in the world) that eschewed bureaucracy and pursued profit.

Milton Hershey was a Pennsylvania farm boy who never went to college. Like Edison, he worked by trial and error and disdained experts. When a trained chemist burned a batch of milk that Hershey was trying to condense to create milk chocolate, a combination that had eluded chocolatiers for centuries, Hershey exploded. He sent for a farm worker, who figured out how to condense the milk within hours. "How come you didn't burn it? You didn't go to college!" Hershey said, handing the man a $100 bill.

Hershey made his fortune through sheer persistence, overcoming bankruptcy three times before striking it rich. But like many entrepreneurs he had little interest in the running his established enterprise. Worse still, Hershey was bored by finance and statistics and he didn't put a system in place to guide the firm that bore his name. The company grew but never realized its potential. Instead, Mr. Hershey created Hershey, Pennsylvania, with a free college, free electricity, free country-club memberships, free everything. Hershey paid all of the bills. Meanwhile, he and his successors failed to invest in new technology or spend a single penny on advertising until the late 1960s. By the time the giant woke, it had almost been killed by a company that was once its biggest customer—Mars.

While Hershey dawdled, Mars focused on the fundamentals. Forrest Mars was a born competitor. Estranged from his ne'er-do-well father as an infant, he was raised by his mother's parents. At Berkeley he started a business that more than paid his tuition. He made even more money when he transferred to Yale and started selling ties. After college, he wandered the country posting billboards for cigarette companies. After he plastered the ads on Chicago's famous State Street, he was arrested. He first met his father when the old man read about him in the newspaper and bailed him out of jail. The two decided to go into the candy business.

The younger Mars was ruthless about quality and efficiency. While he deserves the bulk of the credit for building the business, his explosive temper eventually led to his exile. After starting a new candy company from scratch in Britain, he returned to the states to found M&M Ltd., which ultimately became part of Mars. He created a lean, aggressive company. Memos are against company policy. Large meetings are short and rare. There is no assigned corporate parking, no private offices, no expense accounts. Everyone's paycheck is tied to corporate performance. Quality and cleanliness are twin obsessions. Mars would not countenance one less drop of chocolate in his candy. Mars later applied his business formula to pet foods (a category he invented) and Uncle Ben's Rice, a food he pioneered. His company is now four times the size of Hershey.

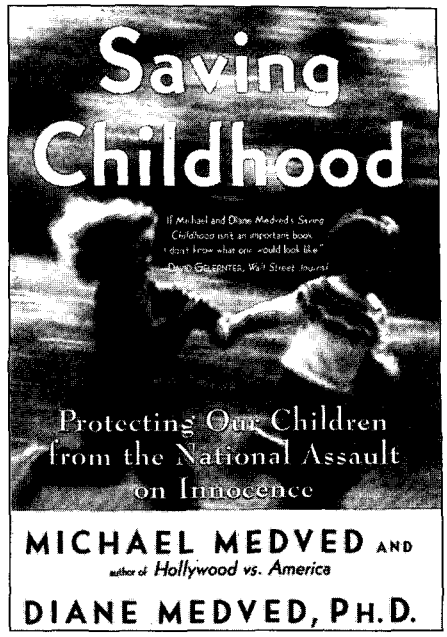
Beyond the corporate rivalry, there is a lesson in this book about Americans: Though we may admire utopians like Hershey, we depend on capitalists like Mars for progress—even in a business as sweet as chocolate.

Richard Miniter writes for Reader's Digest, *the* Wall Street Journal, *and other national publications.*

INNOCENCE AGOG

By Evan Gahr

Saving Childhood: Protecting Our Children from the National Assault on Innocence
By Michael & Diane Medved
HarperCollins, 292 pages, $24



It's a familiar refrain: When liberals lobby for social programs they usually implore Congress to cough up big bucks lest "the children" suffer. Indeed, Marian Wright Edelman has candidly stated that she founded the Children's Defense Fund in the 1970s specifically to maintain funding for Great Society programs that the public would no longer support merely to help "the poor." Hardly a day goes by without a Clinton administration member suggesting that "the children" will face immeasurable harm if right-wing meanies manage to cut some corner of the federal budget.

In truth, children *are* under attack these days—but not from the right-wing bogeymen that occupy such a large place in Hillary Clinton's imagination. In *Saving Childhood: Protecting Our Children from the National Assault on Innocence,* Michael and Diane Medved delineate the myriad of social forces—everything from sex-saturated television to foul-mouthed peers—that assault childhood innocence. "The very idea of parental protectiveness has been overwhelmed by relentless pressure from a society that seems determined to expose its young to every perversion and peril in an effort to 'prepare' them for a harsh, dangerous world."

The effort is a bit like tossing a child into shark-infested waters to teach him to swim. Tough love? Hardly. It's fatalism disguised as realism, ineptitude cloaked as practicality. Not surprisingly it leaves children, as the Medveds illustrate, feeling excessively fearful of a world that seems fraught with peril.

This book, however, is not all gloom and doom. After dissecting the arguments of those who seek to redefine the protective mission out of parenting, the Medveds provide a blueprint for mothers and fathers who want to keep their kids from the cultural sharks. It's a daunting task, but the Medveds offer a number of practical and specific suggestions, along with anecdotes gleaned from rearing their own three children in a home infused with the joy and exuberance of Orthodox Judaism.

But first, know your opponent. The Medveds describe exactly how kids, of all socioeconomic backgrounds, are under attack.

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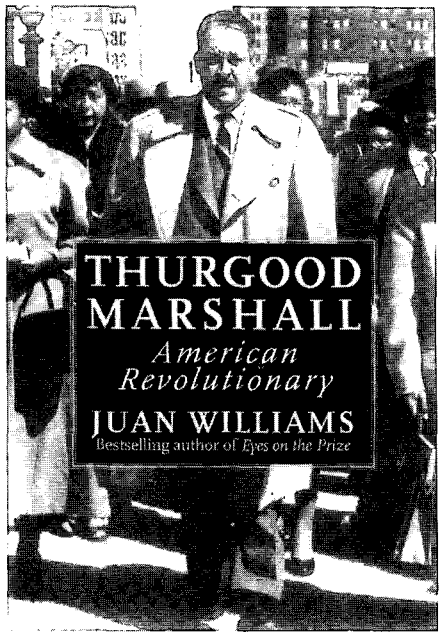
Culprit number-one is television—"the enemy of every youngster's childhood"—because it contributes to the breakdown of fundamental juvenile notions such as "adults are responsible for kids" and "the world is a friendly place." Unlike many cultural critics, the Medveds don't distinguish between good and bad television. They claim that "Sesame Street" and the violence-filled "Power Rangers" cartoons both exert a "worrisome influence" that encourages restlessness in viewers. The problem is the very medium: Television's penchant for fast-paced action, its obsession with the here and now promotes "impatience, self-pity and superficiality."

And that's only what kids suffer at home. When they venture outside the nest, music and movies reinforce television's insidious messages. As movies and television "plant in children's minds the idea that they know better than their elders, youngsters discount their parents' authority and doubt that they can count on their parents to be responsible and come through. It's a quick chain reaction to feeling insecure, tense, afraid and worried that they may have to either take care of themselves or worse, take care of their incompetent parents."

Schools promote much the same sensibility. The Medveds cite an instance in which kids at a Virginia school were encouraged to write about things they couldn't tell their parents. Instead of teaching right and wrong, schools emphasize feeling good about yourself. The end result is that kids aren't taught—through action and example—that adulthood means taking responsibility.

In another realm, however, schools push kids into adulthood awfully fast. Educators claim that "they have a duty to prepare kids for today's grim reality, and they can't help it if innocence suffers when they offer facts kids 'need' to know." The main vehicle is sex-education courses, which now teach even preschoolers about homosexuality, and instruct first-graders to point to their genitals. Instead of gentle talk at the right moment about the birds and the bees, they are thrust head-first into a hornets' nest.

With childhood under assault, how can parents erect barricades? The



Medveds have a number of suggestions. The first is to restore a sense of security to children, with the family as bedrock. Many families—like the Medveds—find that rituals rooted in religious faith provide security. When the Medveds moved from Los Angeles to Mercer Island, Washington, for Michael's new job, the children found the change disorienting. But sitting in their new house, with the furniture not yet delivered, they found comfort in their customary Sabbath meal.

For non-religious families, security can be ensured by enforcing etiquette. "That's right, put the napkin on your lap.... Etiquette is particularly essential for children because it provides them with perhaps the most powerful source of security: knowing what's expected of them." A basic structure of rules instills in children a sense of discipline and order.

The Medveds also encourage parents to instill a "sense of wonder" in children by encouraging their belief in "Santa Claus, Easter Bunny and Tooth Fairies." They urge that you read to your kids—and not the latest book designed to bolster their self-esteem but rather classic morality tales.

All these suggestions, of course, require loving and devoted parents, and take lots of hard work. But if charity begins at home, so does concern for children, as the Medveds wonderfully illustrate.

Evan Gahr is a Contributing Writer for The American Enterprise.

THURGOOD MARSHALL: AMERICAN NEOCONSERVATIVE?

By Daniel E. Troy

Thurgood Marshall:
American Revolutionary
By Juan Williams
Times Books, 400 pages, $27.50

In this excellent and important book, *Washington Post* writer Juan Williams paints a surprising picture of the late Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall. He reveals a Marshall who:

- Possessed an "unyielding integrationist worldview," and said to the NAACP that every American should be judged on "individual merit rather than such irrelevant considerations as race and color."
- Cooperated with FBI director J. Edgar Hoover in purging Communists from the NAACP, publicly stating that "there is no place in this organization for Communists or those who follow the Communist line."
- Said of Malcolm X that he was "a bum, hell, he was a damned pimp—a convicted pimp, about as lowlife as you can get," and explained that "Malcolm X and I didn't get along because I don't believe that everything that's black is right and everything that's white is wrong."
- Criticized blacks who used race "as an excuse" for not taking care of their property or educating their children.
- Defended as patriotic the black soldiers who fought in the Vietnam War, and announced in 1966 that "if our country needs fighting men we are always there."
- During the 1960s, denounced the call for "Black Power," saying "Black separatism will breed nothing."
- Called the United States Constitution "the best I've ever seen."

These statements may surprise those who remember Marshall as an embittered, ultra-liberal Supreme Court Justice. Williams focuses on Marshall's early career as the NAACP's leading lawyer, and argues that although Marshall was a revolutionary, he was, in the words of one chapter title, "no radical." Williams brings to life an exciting, brave, and savvy Marshall. He convincingly contends that Marshall—much

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more than the martyrs Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X—was "the architect of American race relations in the twentieth century."

Born in 1908, Marshall grew up in a Baltimore black community that had a long tradition of owning businesses and holding skilled jobs. Although as a youngster Marshall was relatively sheltered from the Jim Crow segregation plaguing most of America. He watched his community fight against the Democratic Party's efforts to prohibit wealthy blacks from moving into white neighborhoods. These experiences, plus some early, positive relationships with whites, especially some Jewish merchants, caused Marshall to develop an integrationist perspective.

Marshall spent much of his time at the all-black Lincoln University in Pennsylvania drinking and womanizing, two habits he never gave up. Eventually, his older classmate, the poet Langston Hughes, as well as others, persuaded Marshall to devote some of his attention to fighting Jim Crow. Marshall left college determined to be a lawyer, and was bitterly disappointed that the University of Maryland would not admit him because of his race. (He nursed a grudge about this his whole life, refusing, while a Supreme Court Justice, to attend the ceremony in which the law school named its library after him.)

At Howard University Law School in Washington, D.C., Marshall came under the tutelage of Dean Charles Hamilton Houston, who later became the NAACP's top lawyer in New York. The most fascinating—and unnerving—parts of the book recount Marshall's fight against Jim Crow practices in the South from the 1930s through the 1950s. Although observers occasionally questioned Marshall's legal acumen, his bravery in facing down bigoted Southern mobs was remarkable. Marshall may have received some assistance from a few friendly judges and law school professors but ultimately it was Marshall who signed the briefs and made the winning arguments to the Supreme Court that eventually dismantled legal segregation.

Williams recaptures the heady days after *Brown v. Board of Education*, when Marshall was universally acclaimed as "Mr. Civil Rights." He then shows how Marshall fell out of step with the radical turn that the civil-rights movement took at the start of the 1960s. In a sense, Marshall was a victim of his success: The civil-rights movement of the 1960s, which could never have existed without Marshall's legal victories, rendered him obsolete in the eyes of more militant blacks.

Williams is unstinting in explaining how Marshall changed from a dynamic leader championing the vision of an integrated, color-blind society into an overweight, reclusive, lazy Supreme Court Justice who, by 1976, was "off on the Court's left wing," essentially irrelevant to the outcome of cases.

Marshall's Supreme Court tenure was also marred by what the author characterizes as "abrupt, rude behavior." As an example of Marshall's deterioration, Williams reports that, soon after his appointment, Marshall's family had to move from their southwest Washington, D.C., neighborhood because, in the words of one of Marshall's longtime friends, "he would get drunk and get out of the house and get out on the street. And in his drunkenness, he would accost women."

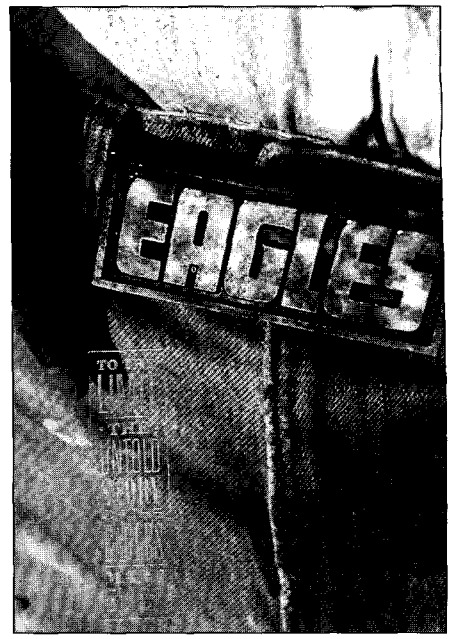
After Marshall died, Chief Justice William Rehnquist said of him, "I think he [will] be thought of as a great legal advocate, but I don't think he would have been thought of as a great legal thinker." By focusing his book on Marshall's career as an advocate, Williams undoes some of the harm Marshall did as a Justice to his lasting image.

Daniel E. Troy is a Washington lawyer and an associate scholar of legal studies at the American Enterprise Institute.

LIFE IN THE BRATS' LANE

By Clark Stooksbury

To the Limit: The Untold Story of the Eagles
By Marc Eliot
Little Brown, 370 pages, $25



The Eagles were one of the most popular and important rock acts of the 1970s. They arose from the Southern California-based "Mellow Mafia" of performers who included Linda Ronstadt, whom the original members of the band played behind a few times; Jackson Browne, co-writer of the first Eagles hit, "Take it Easy"; and Poco, a band that at different times featured Eagles' bassists Randy Meisner and Timothy Schmidt.

The Eagles' brand of music was sometimes called "country rock" although they weren't very country and they didn't really rock. By the time the original members formed in Los Angeles, they were professionals. They occasionally protested about what the Suits were doing to their Art, but making money was always at the forefront of their goals. Don Henley had the realistic view that show business was "like being in football. After a while, your knees go and you have to start selling insurance."

It should surprise no one that in Marc Eliot's book we learn more about Don Henley and Glenn Frey than the other Eagles. Henley and Frey were the dominant members of the band and have had the most success in their solo careers. Eliot is starstruck over the big two. In most instances where another member of the band locks horns with Henley or Frey (and there was plenty of conflict), the stars end up looking better.

Henley and the boys felt that because of their laid-back image, they received insufficient respect from rock critics. Specifically, *Rolling Stone* and the New York media would not give them their due. The Eagles' paranoia over critical at-

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tention led their manager, Irving Azoff, to demand a guaranteed win at the 1978 Grammy Awards ceremony if they were to appear there.

The portrayal of the Eagles in *To the Limit* is not pretty. According to *USA Today*, Henley was upset with the book because he did not want disclosed the band's drug use, his habit of filming himself with groupies (earning the sobriquet "Nikon Don"), and other damaging facts. Henley's toilet-paper memo to a hotel maid depicts his petty eccentricity. It specified his "preference for the toilet paper coming off the top of the roll rather than the bottom, something [the hotel maid] could not seem to get straight."

The Eagles were involved in more sniping, backbiting, and whining than a class of fifth-graders. If you need to know all the gory details, read *To the Limit*. But if you only want the essence, listen to the 1978 solo anthem "Life's Been Good" by band member Joe Walsh. In eight minutes and four seconds he presents what Eliot labors to recreate in nearly 400 pages:

"I live in hotels, tear out the walls, I have accountants pay for it all/I go to parties some times until four/It's hard to leave when you can't find the door/It's tough to handle this fortune and fame/Everybody's so different, I haven't changed/Life's been good to me so far....

Clark Stooksbury has written for Chronicles *and* Liberty.

EUROTRASH RECYCLED

By Martin Morse Wooster

Reconstructing America: The Symbol of America in Modern Thought
By James W. Ceaser
Yale University Press, 250 pages, $30

Read thoughtful magazines and serious newspapers, and you'll find that the most irritating articles usually feature a European interpreting American life. Foreign writers usually have no appreciation whatever of why America is a great nation.

In his thoughtful and occasionally brilliant book, James Ceaser, a political scientist at the University of Virginia, reminds us that ever since America became independent, Europeans have been trying to put us in our place. And the things that European intellectuals have denounced America for, Ceaser argues, lie at the root of many of today's most important political debates.

Denunciations of America, Ceaser argues, are equally divided between Europe's right and left. Although the book covers 200 years of history, in his most interesting section, Ceaser shows that America-bashing among German conservatives helped pave the way for Hitler. The German Right, Ceaser argues, despised America's lack of aristocracy and hierarchy. After Germany's defeat in the First World War, they saw themselves as creating a "third way" between Communism and what they called *Amerikanterum* (Americanness).

Arthur Moeller van den Bruck, who, in a 1923 bestseller, coined the term "Third Reich," denounced America as the land of assembly lines and rootlessness. Oswald Spengler, in his 1932 book *The Year of Decision*, went further. Russia and America, Spengler argued, were morally equivalent nations where "life is organized exclusively from the economic side," where "the Faustian will-to-power...translated from organic growth into soulless mechanization." Americanism, added novelist Ernst Jünger, saw workers only as units to be deployed in factories, not as human beings. The only way to fight American notions, he argued, was to conscript Germans into perpetually mobilized battalions. "Alongside the armies that meet each other on the battlefields," Jünger wrote, "there arise the new armies of transportation, food production, and the armaments industry—the universal army of work."

None of these German right-wingers were Nazis, and a few (most notably Spengler) were persecuted by the Third Reich. But their hatred of America, a land they never visited, ensured that these German rightists would create ideas that helped the Nazis come to power.

After World War II, German émigrés, most notably Martin Heidegger and Herbert Marcuse, took the ideas of the German Right, dropped the attacks on the Soviet Union, and became anti-American leftists. For Heidegger, America was a barren land of technology and science. Heidegger enjoyed quoting the poet Rainer Maria Rilke, who argued that America produced "pure undifferentiated things, mere things of appearance, sham articles." ("Rilke's statement," Ceaser observes, "antedated by a half-century the availability of plastic fruits from K-Mart.")

JAMES W. CEASER

RECONSTRUCTING AMERICA

Anti-American Europeans are rarely taken seriously in our country, but Ceaser argues their influences are felt in our classrooms and courts. Every time one reads a historian arguing that American Presidents are as awful as fascist or Communist tyrants, or an essay that "proves" that Americans are prisoners of race, class, gender, or other states that they are powerless to change, the ideas that can be traced to some dead German or French scholar who derived all his knowledge about America from movies, books, or plays.

"It is time to take America back," writes Ceaser, "from the literary critics, philosophers, and self-styled postmodern thinkers who have made the very name 'America' a symbol for that which is grotesque, obscene, monstrous, stultifying, stunted, leveling, deadening, deracinating, deforming, rootless, uncultured, and—always in quotation marks—'free.'"

Are you tired of pretentious Europeans lecturing about why America is vile? Then you ought to read *Reconstructing America.*

Martin Morse Wooster is an associate editor of The American Enterprise.

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off The Shelf

A REGULAR REVIEW OF CLASSIC, OVER-LOOKED, NEWLY RELEVANT, OR OTHERWISE DESERVING OLDER BOOKS

THE RELIGIOUS ROOTS OF SUCCESS

By Gerald J. Russello

Progress and Religion
By Christopher Dawson, 1929

Perhaps the best indication that a book is a classic is that it is even more applicable to current events than to events at the time it was first published. That is surely the case with Christopher Dawson's masterpiece, *Progress and Religion.* Grand narrative history that reveals deep-rooted themes in human history and their connections to the present is back in style. Francis Fukuyama and Samuel Huntington, to take two prominent examples, have tried in different ways to discern patterns of historical change and the forces that will motivate countries and cultures in the next century. Seven decades ago, Dawson anticipated this trend, as well as today's resurgence of criticism of the idea that cultures grow increasingly secular and materialistic, and less religious, over time.

Christopher Dawson (1889-1970) was one of the ablest practitioners of historical writing of this century. Arnold Toynbee, T. S. Eliot, and others praised Dawson for his crisp, flexible style, wide learning, and passion for ideas. The last of the amateur historians, Dawson conducted his researches largely in his own private library, and without institutional support. Only in the late 1960s, when he held the Stillman chair at Harvard, did he have a significant academic post. This intellectual isolation led to an independent cast of mind unconstrained by disciplinary boundaries: Dawson authored or edited works on subjects ranging from early European contacts with Asia to the nineteenth-century Oxford movement. Although a trenchant (but sympathetic) critic of America, and a devoted Englishman, Dawson became, through his years at Harvard, more admired here than in his homeland.

Dawson's abiding concern was the relationship between religious faith and cultural development. "Every living culture," he writes, "must possess some spiritual dynamic, which provides the energy necessary for that sustained social effort which is civilization." *Progress and Religion*, published in 1929, was the second installment of a planned five-volume work exploring that relationship from pre-history through the modern era. The first volume, *The Age of the Gods,* concerned the connection with the divine in so-called primitive cultures. (It is one of Dawson's great achievements to demonstrate that "primitive" was often an epithet used by modern scholars who could not appreciate that connection.) Dawson incorporates the insights and methodologies of the then-emerging fields of anthropology and sociology into a more traditional historical approach, and creates a compelling description of the importance of religious belief to cultural development, from the earliest recorded history to modern Asia and Europe.

Although *Progress and Religion* explores two of the central themes in Western culture, Dawson does not begin with the West. Rather, he first engages in an extended comparative study of world religions and their connection to cultural success. "The great civilizations of the world do not produce the great religions as a kind of cultural by-product; in a very real sense the great religions are the foundations on which the great civilizations rest," he writes. *Progress and Religion* concludes with an examination of that relationship in the specific context of Christianity and the Western world.

Dawson points out the continuing and complex influences that cultures have on one another, and carefully distinguishes between ephemeral cultural achievements and lasting values that transcend their particular cultural expression. Indeed, several cultures considered "lower" in the Enlightenment scheme actually represented the possibilities of human society more completely, he says. As examples, Dawson cites the Israelites in Egypt, and the early Christians who invigorated a dying Classical culture with a new vision. Only by recognizing the interplay between the temporary life of a particular culture and the strength of its underlying values can one assess true progress.

The modern notion of progress was at first part of an unbounded faith in the power of "reason." But through the work of Herbert Spencer, Bertrand Russell, and Darwin, human reason was eventually considered merely an evolutionary byproduct bound by the laws of nature. "Reason, which had entered so triumphantly on its career of explaining nature and man to itself by its own unaided power, ended in a kind of rational suicide by explaining itself away." The techniques of Science replaced Reason as the measure of human society.

Science and Reason are not enough, however, to maintain a living culture, and Dawson calls for a reintegration of the scientific achievements of Western culture with the moral heritage found in its religious tradition. Without that tradition, "science becomes a neutral force which lends itself to the service of militarism and economic exploitation as readily as to the service of humanity." The tragedies of the twentieth century make the lesson of *Progress and Religion* worth learning once again.

Gerald J. Russello has edited a collection of Dawson's works published by the Catholic University of America Press.

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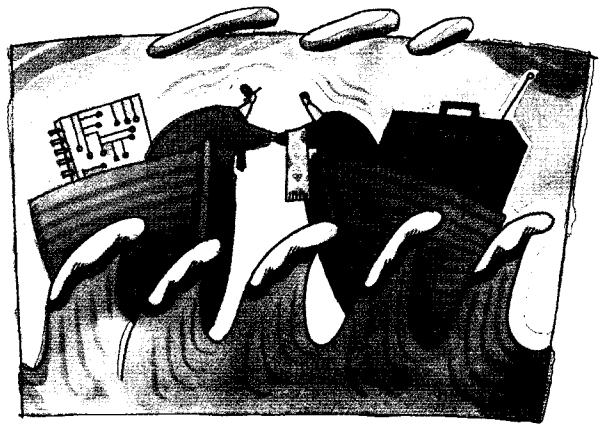
EDITED BY MARTIN MORSE WOOSTER

the Digest



SUMMARIES OF IMPORTANT NEW RESEARCH FROM THE NATION'S UNIVERSITIES, THINK TANKS, AND INVESTIGATIVE PUBLICATIONS

POLITICS

Third Way? No Way

Michael Novak, Is There a Third Way? *Institute of Economic Affairs, 2 Lord North Street, London SW1P 3LB, England.*

In recent years, left-wing European political parties have been able to return to power by promising to pursue a "third way" between the command-and-control socialism they advocated in the past and the unfettered capitalism they have long attacked as heartless. Michael Novak, of the American Enterprise Institute, applauds these politicians for moving away from traditional socialist nostrums, but has several suggestions if they genuinely want to break from their old errors:

Recognize that the problems of the poor are primarily cultural, not economic. While European social welfare policies cause economic problems, "it is the *spiritual* crisis of the welfare state that is the most severe." Welfare inevitably degrades the ability of its recipients to be productive, self-reliant citizens. In the 1960s, Swedish social democrat Gunnar Myrdal insisted Swedes would remain virtuous as the welfare state expanded. A decade later he admitted so many Swedes were fraudulently accepting government benefits that "the morals of Sweden had weakened, perhaps irrevocably."

Devolve power as much as possible. As Pope John Paul II has argued, "by intervening directly and depriving society of its responsibility, the Social Assistance State leads to a loss of human energies and an inordinate increase in public agencies." No matter how many edicts they issue, bureaucrats in national capitals can do little to persuade irresponsible people to lead better lives. Only local communities and voluntary associations, not central governments, can teach responsibility and skills to the underprivileged.

Work to lift up the poor, not to attack the rich. Helping the poor is admirable, but assaulting the rich by punitive taxation often springs from "envy, anger, and destructiveness." Instead of treating capitalists as enemies, governments ought to make it simple to go into business, so the poor can free themselves from poverty.

"Third way" governments can best improve the lives of the poor, Novak argues, by encouraging them to be capitalist entrepreneurs. "Europe has spent more than 150 years denigrating capital," Novak concludes. "Too bad. Ordinary families are much helped by having it. Making capital stock universal among families is a worthy aim."

ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS

Wanted: Another Crack at Trade Barriers

Patrick Lane, "World Trade: Time for Another Round," in The Economist *(October 3, 1998), 25 St. James's Street, London SW1A 1HG, England.*

In the 1930s, the world's industrial nations reacted to the Great Depression by erecting high tariff walls, which only deepened the global slump and slowed recovery. Today the world economy is significantly larger, but still afflicted by recessions. When a contraction occurs, warns the *Economist*'s Patrick Lane, protectionism is still the wrong response: "The lesson of the 1930s is that free trade, far from being a luxury affordable only when times are good, becomes utterly essential when times are bad."

In 1948, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) went into effect, and five decades of talks have reduced the average global tariff to only about 4 percent. While plenty of work to lower tariffs in specific areas remains to be done, Lane suggests that negotiations are most needed to end *non*-tariff barriers that keep prices high:

Corporate welfare. Government subsidies to businesses not only thwart free trade but also harm the environment by encouraging overconsumption. For example, farm subsidies lead farmers to overproduce, while coal subsidies encourage power plants to use smoke-belching fuels.

Labor subsidies. The Trade Adjustment Assistance program rewards American workers who are displaced due to foreign trade with up to an additional year of unemployment compensation if they enroll in certain training courses. Yet a report from the Brookings Institution and the Progressive Policy Institute charges that this aid *discourages* displaced workers from looking for employment and that there's scant evidence the required training is helpful.

Internal trade barriers. The Jones Act requires shippers between two U.S. ports to use a domestic carrier instead of a foreign one. This causes freight costs in U.S. waters to be four times as high as they would be if foreign competition were allowed.

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Such non-tariff barriers, Lane concludes, hinder the free and growing trade that offers nations "the prospect of earlier recovery" from recessions.

Lessons From Economic History

Lawrence B. Lindsey. Economic Puppetmasters: Lessons from the Halls of Power. *AEI Press, 1150 17th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.*

To understand why much of the world economy is in the doldrums, one must understand why the world's leading economic decisionmakers in government and business act as they do, writes Lawrence Lindsey of the American Enterprise Institute. And to do that, he adds, you have to know history.

For example, following World War II, MacArthur tried to diminish the Japanese bureaucracy's clout, with little success. In particular, the Finance Ministry remained intact. Japanese members of parliament, by contrast, have very small staffs, and Japanese politicians rely on the Finance Ministry for economic advice.

Meanwhile, the founders and top officers of leading industrial combines like Mitsubishi were purged from their positions and replaced by professional managers with backgrounds similar to those of the government bureaucrats. Leaders in both the bureaucracies and the executive suites were products of Japan's exclusive Tokyo University. This emphasis on elite credentials made it difficult for entrepreneurs to make it to the top, explaining why Japan has no equivalent of Harvard dropout Bill Gates. Punitive income tax rates of up to 65 percent further discourage enterprise.

So why was the Japanese economy seemingly so strong in the 1980s? Much of its growth in those years, Lindsey explains, resulted from a highly leveraged, bank-debt-driven financial system that helped inflate assets like real estate. In 1989, for example, Japanese economists estimated the land underneath the Imperial Palace was worth more than all the land in California. When land prices returned to normal levels, the economy contracted, and banks were left with property they couldn't sell.

In addition, corporate guarantees of lifetime employment ensure that Japanese businesses are increasingly burdened with older workers who produce subpar returns. The result: Japan's sclerotic economy can only be changed by a bureaucracy that is "unlikely to reform fundamentally a system of which it is the central part."

The German economy, Lindsey suggests, can also be understood by looking at the past. In 1946-47, the aftermath of World War II left West German industrial production at 1865 levels. In 1948 West Germany's finance minister, Ludwig Erhard, instituted two dramatic reforms: He ended wage and price controls, and he both devalued the currency and gave each West German 40 new marks to spend. Soon the German economy was thriving.

Helmut Kohl, German chancellor from 1982-98, came of age during Erhard's tenure and learned valuable lessons. He wanted to ensure the country would never again enter a destructive war. He also wanted the German mark to remain strong so as to prevent the post-World War I hyperinflation that destroyed the savings of millions of hard-working Germans, including his father.

To make war less likely, Kohl worked to strengthen ties between Germany and the rest of Europe. This resulted in the Maastricht Treaty of 1991, which commits most Western European countries to replace their national currencies with the euro, to replace their national finance ministries with a German-dominated European Central Bank headquartered in Frankfurt, and to drastically reduce their national budget deficits.

But as the deadline for the introduction of the euro neared, nations had to fight deficits by raising taxes and cutting spending, thereby putting a damper on economic growth. Labor laws have further harmed European economies. German engineers, for example, aren't allowed to work more than seven-and-a-half hours per day; so an engineer with a hot idea at 3:30 will face heavy fines from his union if he works on it after 4:00. Other unproductive regulations also hinder Europe. To protect small shopkeepers, for instance, Italy—with 57 million people—has only allowed 230 supermarkets to be built.

Lindsey believes the fiscal discipline the euro has imposed on European economies might well make them more productive. But it's also possible the European Central Bank, unelected and unaccountable, will lose credibility since its financial decisionmaking is unconnected to political decisionmaking in the various nations of the European Union. "History has not been kind to monetary unions that do not include the prospect of political union," Lindsey concludes.

SOCIETY

Conservatives Are More Generous

Mark D. Regnerus, Christian Smith, and David Sikkink, "Who Gives to the Poor? The Influence of Religious Tradition and Political Location on the Personal Generosity of Americans Toward the Poor," in Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion *(September 1998), 1365 Stone Hall, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana 47907.*

Liberals often boast they are more compassionate toward the poor than conservatives. University of North Carolina academics Regnerus, Smith, and Sikkink find little evidence for this claim: "The conventional wisdom regarding the hostility of politically and theologically conservative Christians towards the poor appears incorrect."

The authors examined a 1996 survey conducted by the Pew Charitable Trusts which asked respondents how much they'd donated to organizations helping the needy in the past two years. The groups most willing to give "a lot" were evangelical Protestants (29 percent), liberal Protestants (25 percent), and devout Catholics (22 percent), while those most likely to give nothing were non-devout Catholics (19 percent) and liberal Protestants (16 percent). Women were nearly twice as likely to give generously as men (25 to 14 percent). Non-whites were more likely than whites to give large sums (26 to 19 percent).

"The more frequent the church attendance and the greater the importance that religious faith holds in life," the authors write, "the more money respondents give to such poverty-relief organi-

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zations, regardless of their religious identity." The authors found no difference in giving between Democrats, Republicans, or Independents. Nor did they find that belonging to such organizations as the Christian Coalition reduced one's likelihood of giving to the poor.

The authors infer that a great many fundamentalist Protestants and devout Catholics, although voting for politicians who pledge to reduce government welfare programs, actually give more to the poor than many persons who support governmental "compassion."

Who's Picking on Girls?

Judith Kleinfeld, The Myth That Schools Shortchange Girls: Social Science in the Service of Deception. *Women's Freedom Network, 4400 Massachusetts Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.*

Feminists argue that girls are ignored in the classroom and so deserve extensive help. Kleinfeld, a psychologist at the University of Alaska, disagrees and says, "The idea that the 'schools shortchange girls'" is "dangerously wrong." She rebuts the feminists' claims:

Girls don't do as well in the classroom as boys. True, the sexes differ in performance. More high achievers tend to be boys, but so are most of the kids who get in trouble. Boys do somewhat better in math and science, girls better in reading and writing. But the differences are small. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, on a 500-point scale, male high school seniors score an average of five points higher on math tests and eight points higher on science tests, while females score 15 points higher in reading and 17 points higher in writing.

Teachers call on boys more than girls. The evidence shows no pattern favoring boys in the classroom. Some surveys find boys called on more, others report the opposite.

Girls suffer from a lack of self-esteem. Self-esteem is difficult to measure, and teenage self-esteem is often based on appearance, weight, and other things unrelated to academic success. Besides, there is no self-esteem crisis: A 1997 Commonwealth Fund survey found that over 85 percent of boys and girls both "strongly" or "somewhat" agreed with the statements, "I feel I am a person of worth," "I feel I have a number of good qualities," and "I am able to do things as well as most other people."

Kleinfeld also objects that feminists who claim girls are the primary victims in the classroom are silent about the problems of African-American boys: "The focus on promoting female success gives the schools an excuse for ignoring their gravest failure with minority boys."

The Path is Open to School Choice

Richard E. Morgan, "Yes, Vouchers Are Constitutional," in City Journal *(Autumn 1998), Manhattan Institute, 52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, New York 10017.*

The Supreme Court has never ruled whether state-funded school vouchers redeemable at religious schools are constitutional. Richard Morgan of Bowdoin College predicts the Court will one day decide such vouchers are permissible.

Opponents of vouchers claim the Constitution requires a "separation" of church and state. That phrase, however, is not in the U.S. Constitution or in any of the original state constitutions. The First Amendment states, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion." Scholars have concluded that this bars Congress from creating a government-funded church comparable to the Church of England. But the states were always free to subsidize churches, and many did, well into the nineteenth century. As Justice Joseph Story wrote in 1833, "the whole power over the subject of religion is left entirely to the state governments." As late as 1902, for example, the New Hampshire constitution required the state legislature to provide the people with "public Protestant teachers of piety, religion, and morality."

In 1947, Justice Hugo Black resurrected a personal letter by Thomas Jefferson and declared a "wall of separation" prohibited New Jersey from reimbursing the bus fares of students attending parochial schools. The Warren Court of the 1960s and '70s used Justice Black's decision as a precedent to establish a series of tortured decisions about what types of aid religious schools could receive. By 1985, the *Aguilar v. Felton* case barred New York City from using federal funds to have public school teachers supply supplemental math and reading classes to parochial school students—unless the classes took place in separate trailers outside the religiously-tainted schools. (In 1997, the decision was reversed.)

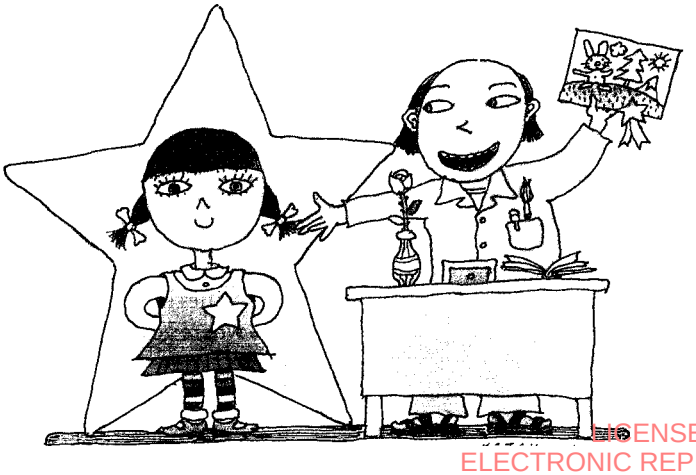
Today about two-thirds of the states have "Blaine amendments," which prohibit them from subsidizing religious schools. These were originally designed to prevent state governments from giving money directly to parochial schools. But since vouchers would leave parents free to use them for secular or religious education, they aren't prohibited by Blaine amendments.

"The traditional American understanding of the separation of church and state is one of pragmatic flexibility," Morgan concludes. Although the Framers did not want the national government subsidizing churches or mandating church attendance, there's no evidence they would have objected to state-supplied vouchers.

The Mixing of State and Religion

Joe Loconte, "The Bully and the Pulpit," in Policy Review *(November/December 1998), Heritage Foundation, 214 Massachusetts Avenue N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002.*

Traditionally, religious charities have taken one of two routes where government funds are concerned. Some



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groups, notably Catholic Charities and Lutheran Social Services, accept government grants and have slowly de-emphasized the religious side of their mission. Other groups have refused to accept government aid and the resulting restrictions on efforts at moral reform. The result is that publicly-funded assistance has been almost entirely value-free.

Loconte of the Heritage Foundation reports that many faith-based organizations are now pursuing a third path—working with government but not taking tax dollars. Such groups are bringing religious messages into secular ground.

Consider the Jester II prison outside Houston. Prison officials have allowed the evangelical Prison Fellowship to operate one wing of Jester. Voluntary prayers in the "God Pod" begin at 5:00 A.M. Fellowship officials have 24-hour access to the prisoners, and they strive to help felons discover Christ. "We talk Jesus every day, every minute," says Prison Fellowship's Jack Cowley, "and we don't hide that fact at all."

The Prison Fellowship's relationship with the prison is carefully constructed. Acceptance into the program (prisoners must apply) has no effect on the length of an inmate's sentence. Prisoners are free to join or leave the program at any time, and Prison Fellowship receives no government subsidies. These restrictions keep the program from being attacked by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). "We don't have an objection to religious activity in prisons that is voluntary and not paid for out of public coffers," says Jay Jacobson of the ACLU's Texas chapter.

In Michigan the religious charity Kids Hope USA sends 720 tutors from 35 congregations to help troubled elementary-school students. The tutors do not evangelize in public schools, and parental permission is required before a child participates in Kids Hope events; thus far, the program has not been attacked by civil libertarians.

"Religious believers and broad-minded lawmakers are ratifying an old precept of American civic life," Loconte concludes, "that collaboration between church and state need not lead to corruption. They are steering their way around those who fret over a lunch time prayer, as well as those who would trade their souls for a government contract."

SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT

Trade and Technology Are Green

Indur M. Goklany, "Saving Habitat and Conserving Biodiversity on a Crowded Planet," in BioScience *(November 1998). American Institute of Biological Sciences, 1444 Eye Street N.W. #200, Washington, D.C. 20005.*

Goklany, a scientist at the U.S. Department of the Interior, argues that two things can ensure the survival of fragile habitats in the developing world: advanced technology and free trade.

Technology has already made a substantial contribution against famine. According to the U.N.'s Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), improved food production has reduced the number of people "suffering from chronic undernourishment" from 35 percent of the global population in 1969-71 to 21 percent in 1990-92. Had world agricultural technology remained fixed at 1960-61 levels, then to feed the world in 1993 an additional 27 percent of the world's land (not counting Antarctica) would have had to be converted into farmland, disturbing many fragile ecosystems.

Wealthier, more technologically advanced nations, having satisfied the basic demands for food, clothing, and shelter, are able to spend more on environmental protection. They also have more "knowledge and service workers" and fewer farmers, ranchers, and miners, which makes "environmental clean-up policies easier to promulgate and enforce, particularly in democracies."

The developing world today is much less efficient. If in 1994 Third World farmers had obtained crop yields equal to the average in the more productive countries—by using more fertilizer, adding lime to acidic soils, using high-yield crop varieties, and improving pesticide usage—this "would have increased global production of all cereals, pulses, roots and tubers, soybeans, and peanuts by 170 percent, 472 percent, 258 percent, 64 percent, and 208 percent, respectively," the FAO reports.

More trade would also be a boon to Third World ecology. Free trade lets developing countries purchase certain crops at lower prices than home-grown crops. The developing countries are then less likely to grow crops on marginal lands and less pressured to overuse more productive lands. Trade also gives poorer nations a vital source of cash. The World Bank reports that private capital flows into the Third World rose from $44 billion to $244 billion from 1990-96, thanks to freer trade.

Technology and trade are not environmental panaceas, Goklany warns, but the alternative of economic and technical stagnation will lead to "a more degraded environment; humanity, particularly its poorest, will be hungrier; and the rest of nature will be further starved of land and water."

Secondhand Bunk

Nicholas Varchaver, "Warning: Secondhand Smoke May Not Kill You," in Brill's Content *(December 1998), 521 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10175.*

Last July, federal judge William Osteen threw out a 1993 report from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) which claimed secondhand tobacco smoke causes cancer. Judge Osteen charged the EPA had "publicly committed to a conclusion before research had begun...failed to disclose important findings and reasoning; and left significant questions without answers."

Newspapers across America denounced Judge Osteen's decision. Varchaver of *Brill's Content* believes Osteen was correct, because evidence for the idea that secondhand smoke causes cancer is quite tenuous.

Varchaver discovered the EPA took several dubious steps in reaching their conclusions. They did not conduct original research but observed 30 studies that focused on couples where one spouse smoked and the other did not. Of the 11 U.S.-based studies the EPA cited, only one established a significant correlation between secondhand smoke and cancer. Judge Osteen also pointed out that three large but incomplete studies were sub-

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mitted to the EPA when it was conducting its risk assessment, and the EPA cited the study that agreed with its prejudices but ignored the two that did not.

A more balanced analysis was conducted by the Congressional Research Service (CRS) in 1995. The CRS found that the risk of dying from secondhand smoke was as low as death from drowning or electrocution. Even nonsmokers who lived with a smoker, the CRS found, were as likely to be murdered as they were to be killed by tobacco smoke.

Varchaver found that the press often overstates evidence that secondhand smoke causes cancer. The *Chicago Tribune,* for instance, has run 105 articles on secondhand smoke since 1990, and all of them reported secondhand smoke causes cancer. Only tobacco company spokesmen were allowed to present dissenting views.

Varchaver says the press ought to be more careful when writing about science. Journalists "tend to take the grays that often characterize the scientific process and portray them in strong blacks and whites."

OTHER COUNTRIES

Will Brazil Someday Thrill?

Michael Reid, "Brazil's Unfinished Search for Stability," in Washington Quarterly *(Autumn 1998), MIT Press, 5 Cambridge Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02142.*

Brazil is the globe's fifth most populous country and has the ninth largest economy, but receives little world attention. The *Economist*'s Reid argues that persistent economic troubles are the reason why. Yet recent tough measures by President Fernando Enrique Cardoso may have brightened the nation's future.

Before he was elected, Brazil suffered from worse inflation than any other Latin American country. Its inflation rates were in the double digits every year from 1953-79, then rose to over 100 percent annually in almost every year between 1980-87 before skyrocketing to four- and even five-digit annual increases.

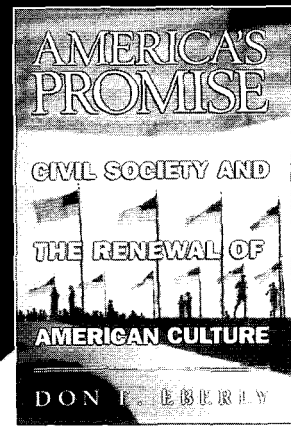
Taking office in 1995, Cardoso introduced a new currency, the real. He removed most protectionist barriers, allowing a flood of lower-cost imports. When the Asian economic crisis hit in late 1997, the Brazilian Central Bank responded by temporarily raising interest rates to 43 percent. This caused some economic damage but ensured the real's stability.

The Cardoso administration has also aggressively privatized government enterprises. State monopolies in electricity, oil, and telecommunications have ended, and the telecommunications company is scheduled to be sold. In the past three years, Brazil has auctioned off $45 billion worth of state-owned businesses, most notably Companhia Vale do Rio Doce, a giant mining company. Foreign investors have also been brought in to manage ports, railways, and roads. Foreign investment in Brazil has increased from $1.4 billion annually in 1990-93 to $11 billion by 1996.

The legislature has so far rebuffed Cardoso's efforts to introduce a Chilean-style privatized social security program. Government workers can still retire in their forties with pensions larger than their previous year's salary and guaranteed cost-of-living increases. As a result, the pensions of 2.9 million government workers cost the country as much as the pensions of 17 million private-sector workers.

Overall, Reid writes, Cardoso has "done much to set Brazil on a new and more hopeful path," but much work remains.

THE NEW GUIDEBOOK FOR AMERICAN RENEWAL



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– **John DiLulio,**
Professor of Politics and Public Affairs,
Princeton University

***Don Eberly** is an affiliate scholar at the Institute for American Values; he has written or edited three previous books on issues of civil society. He is the director of the Civil Society Project, and founder and Chairman of the National Fatherhood Initiative.*

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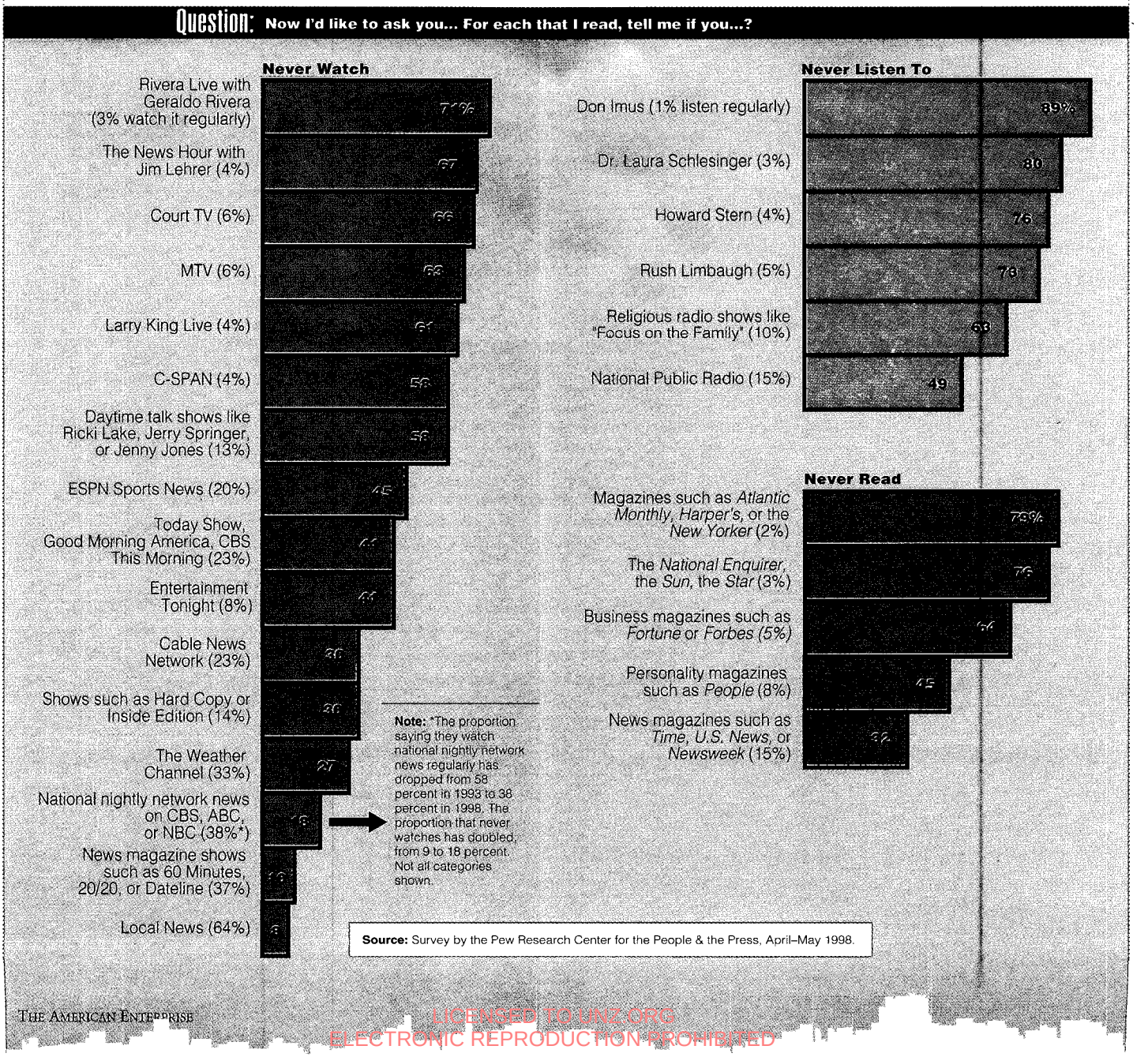
Opinion Pulse

EDITED BY KARLYN BOWMAN

MEDIA CONSUMPTION HABITS

The charts below show the proportion of the public who say they never watch, never listen to, or never read various media. Seventy-one percent never watch "Rivera Live," for example, and only 3 percent watch it regularly. Nearly six in ten say they never watch shows like "Jerry Springer." Thirteen percent watch regularly. Local news is the most popular television programming. Only 8 percent say they never watch it. Three-quarters of Americans say they never read the tabloids, though that probably doesn't count those of us who sneak a peek in the supermarket check-out line.



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TELEVISION TRIVIA

In the 1952–53 season "I Love Lucy" was the top-rated show, and 67 percent of households tuned in to it every week. Only 21 percent tuned in every week to "E.R.," the top-rated show in the most recent season. More households now have three TVs than have one, and the sets are usually on slightly more than 7 hours a day. Viewers have access to more channels than ever before, and the cable audience is growing. The audience share for the highest-rated network evening news show today is lower than it was for the *lowest*-rated network news show 15 years ago.

Top-Rated TV Shows

1950–51	Texaco Star Theatre	NBC	61.6
1951–52	Arthur Godfrey	CBS	53.8
1952–53	I Love Lucy	CBS	67.3
1953–54	I Love Lucy	CBS	58.8
1954–55	I Love Lucy	CBS	49.3
1955–56	$64,000 Question	CBS	47.5
1956–57	I Love Lucy	CBS	43.7
1957–58	Gunsmoke	CBS	43.1
1958–59	Gunsmoke	CBS	39.6
1959–60	Gunsmoke	CBS	40.3
1960–61	Gunsmoke	CBS	37.3
1961–62	Wagon Train	NBC	32.1
1962–63	Beverly Hillbillies	CBS	36.0
1963–64	Beverly Hillbillies	CBS	39.1
1964–65	Bonanza	NBC	36.3
1965–66	Bonanza	NBC	31.8
1966–67	Bonanza	NBC	29.1
1967–68	Andy Griffith	CBS	27.6
1968–69	Rowan & Martin	NBC	31.8
1969–70	Rowan & Martin	NBC	26.3
1970–71	Marcus Welby, MD	ABC	29.6
1971–72	All in the Family	CBS	34.0
1972–73	All in the Family	CBS	33.3
1973–74	All in the Family	CBS	31.2
1974–75	All in the Family	CBS	30.2
1975–76	All in the Family	CBS	30.1
1976–76	Happy Days	ABC	31.5
1977–78	Laverne & Shirley	ABC	31.6
1978–79	Laverne & Shirley	ABC	30.5
1979–80	60 Minutes	CBS	28.2
1980–81	Dallas	CBS	31.2
1981–82	Dallas	CBS	28.4
1982–83	60 Minutes	CBS	25.5
1983–84	Dallas	CBS	25.7
1984–85	Dynasty	ABC	25.0
1985–86	The Cosby Show	NBC	33.8
1986–87	The Cosby Show	NBC	34.9
1987–88	The Cosby Show	NBC	27.8
1988–89	The Cosby Show	NBC	25.5
1989–90	Roseanne	ABC	23.4
1990–91	Cheers	NBC	21.6
1991–92	60 Minutes	CBS	21.7
1992–93	60 Minutes	CBS	21.6
1993–94	Home Improvement	ABC	21.9
1994–95	Seinfeld	NBC	20.4
1995–96	E.R.	NBC	22.0
1996–97	E.R.	NBC	21.2

Sets per Household

1 TV set	26%
2 TV sets	34
3 or more	40

Average Daily TV Usage

7 hours 12 minutes

Average Number of Channels...

Receivable in television households		Watched	
49.2	1997	12.1	1997*

*Defined as 10 or more continuous minutes per channel

Cable TV's Primetime Share of the Television Audience

1985	6%
1997	35

% of Households with...

cable	74%
pay cable	40

News Viewing

	1980–1981 season		1996–1997 season	
	Rating	Share	Rating	Share
ABC	11.8	23	8.5	17
CBS	13.6	26	7.3	15
NBC	11.9	23	8.5	18

Late Night Viewers

Homes Using Television, 11:30pm–1am

1988–1989	28.4%
1996–1997	30.7

Top 5 Telecasts

1	M*A*S*H* Special	1983
2	Dallas	1980
3	Roots, Part VII	1977
4	Super Bowl XVI	1982
5	Super Bowl XVII	1983

Top 5 Shows in Syndication

1. Wheel of Fortune
2. Jeopardy
3. Home Improvement
4. Oprah Winfrey
5. Seinfeld

% of Households with a...

remote	93%
VCR	8

Source: Data from Nielsen Media Research "1998 Report on Television."

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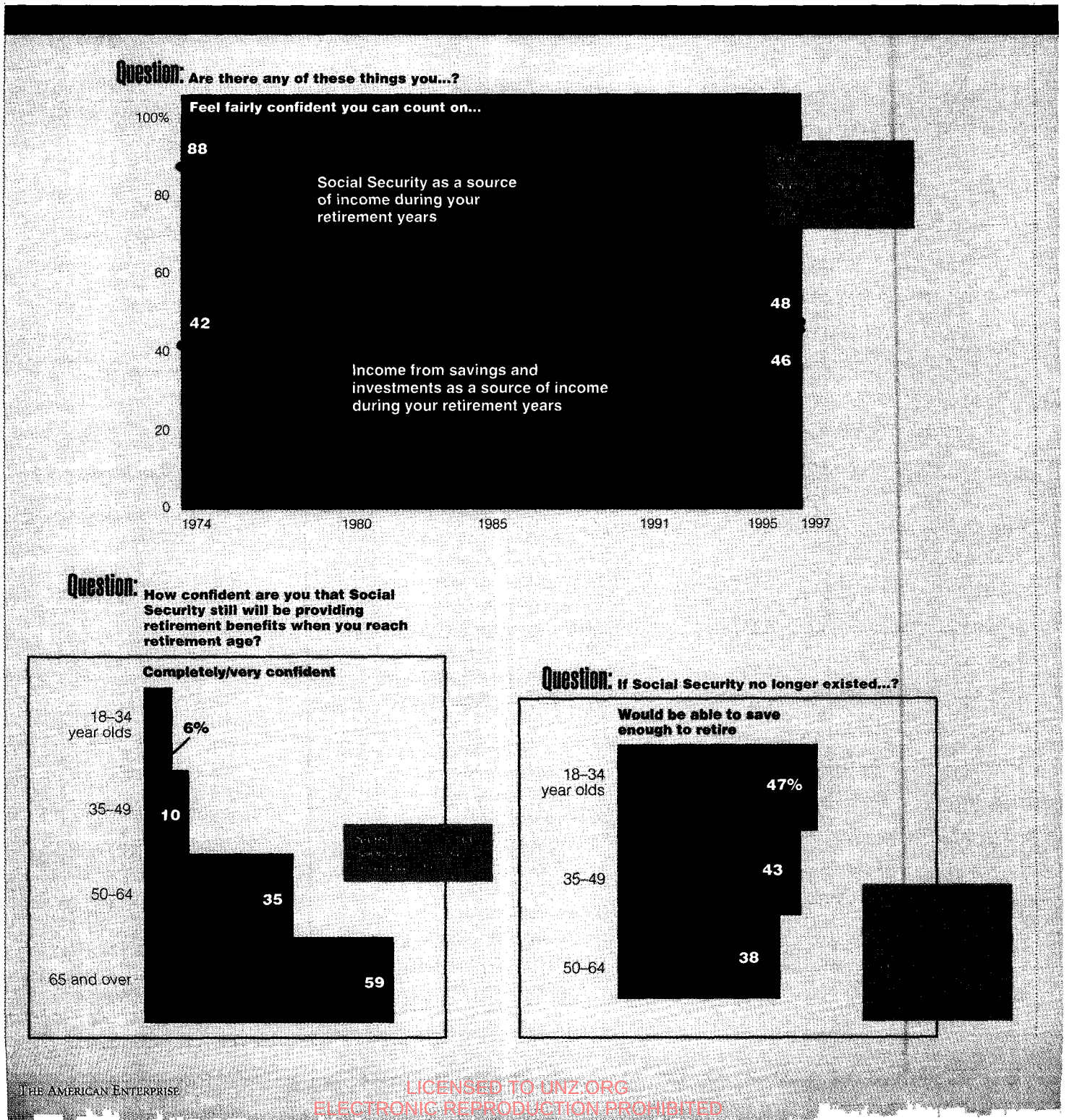
SOCIAL SECURITY AND THE ALTERNATIVES

For the first time since 1974, more people feel fairly confident that they can count on their personal savings in retirement than feel they can count on Social Security for those years. Confidence in Social Security has fallen sharply in the past quarter-century. Today very few young people feel that the program will be around for them. That conviction may explain why a near majority, 47 percent, of the young (and 44 percent of all Americans under age 65) say they would be able to save enough to retire if Social Security no longer existed.



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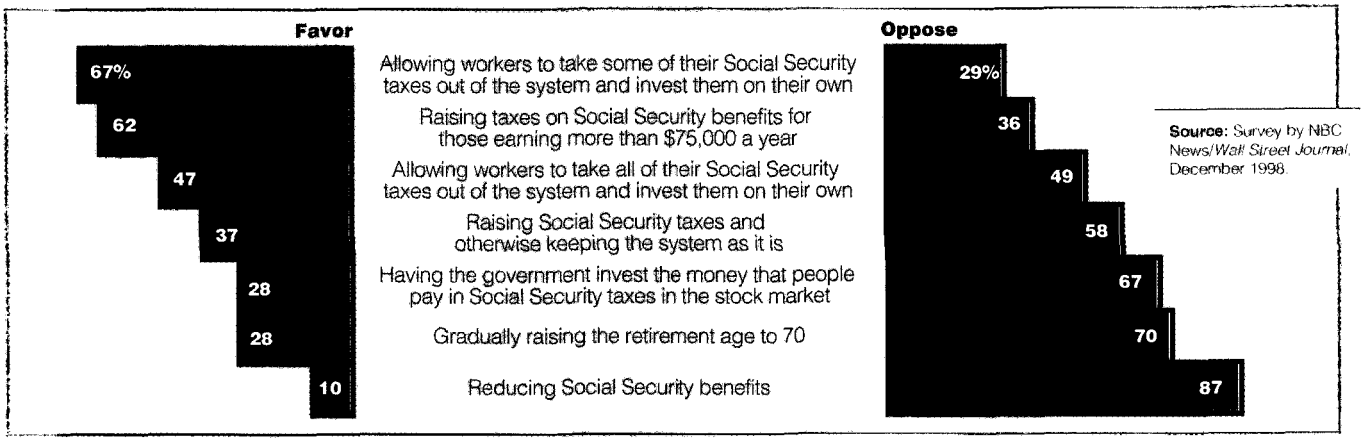
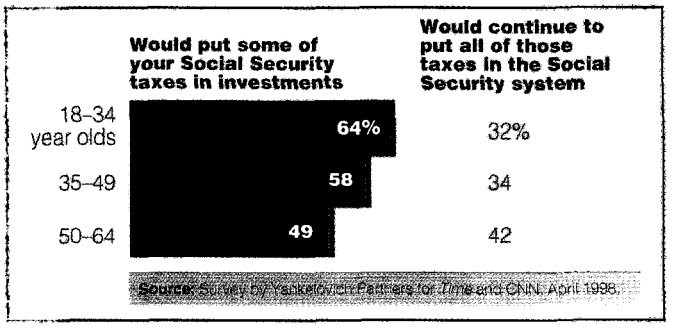
Two-thirds of the public are receptive to allowing workers to use some of their Social Security taxes to invest on their own. Majorities of non-retired people would put some of these taxes in investments such as the stock market if given the opportunity, and majorities feel they would do an excellent or good job investing. Only one in ten feel that government should control those investments. Responses to a question about replacing Social Security that was asked both before and after the stock market*s tumble last fall did not change.

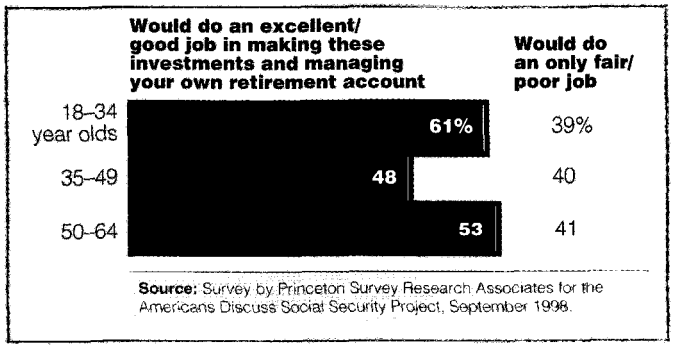
Question: **As you may know, without any changes the Social Security system will have a financial shortfall starting in the year 2029. I'm going to read you a number of reforms that have been proposed to deal with the system, and for each one I'd like you to tell me whether that is something you favor or oppose...?**



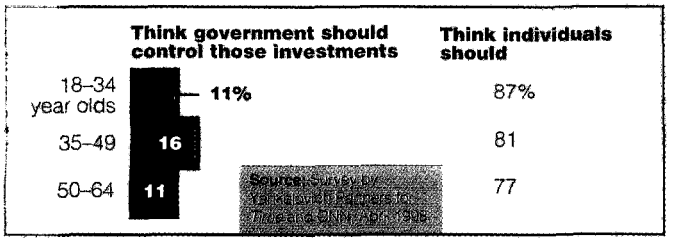
Question: **If this option (taking some of your Social Security taxes and putting them in investments such as the stock market) became available ...?**



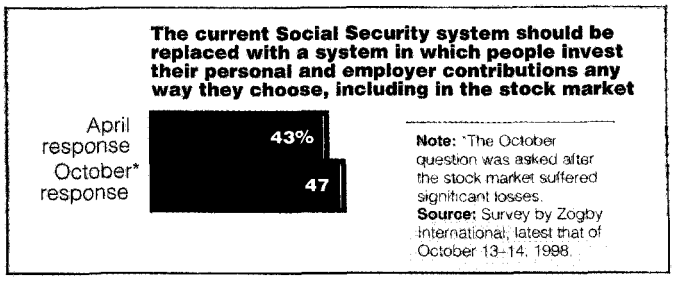
Question: **If Social Security becomes a system where individuals invest some of their payroll contributions themselves, how well...?**



Question: **If the government allowed people to invest part of their Social Security taxes in investments such as the stock market, do you...?**



Question: **Do you agree or disagree...?**



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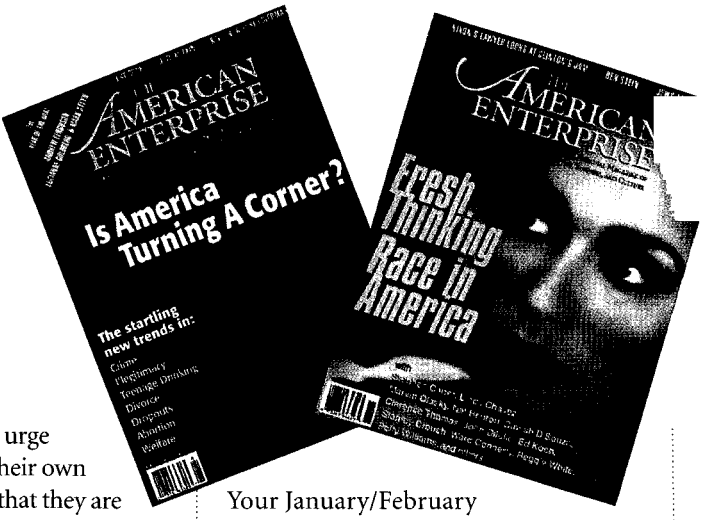

Ying Ma's article, "Black Racism: The Hate That Dare Not Speak Its Name" (November/December), is a distortion of reality because the real problem is the Asian hatred of blacks. Go to any college campus or any major city: Actions speak louder than words. An increasing population of mixed couples is becoming the norm. Whites and Asians have socially accepted one another and left black people out.

Asian Americans know the problems that exist between blacks and whites and harbor the same racist feelings that whites have against black people. This only increases racial tension.

Asians want the American dream that they feel white people have achieved, and so they associate with white people who seem to have it all and not with black people who, as a whole, struggle to reach it.

Growing up in upstate New York in the early '70s as a quiet African-American girl, I got beat up by black kids, too, because of my demeanor not my skin color. I rode the school bus with bullies who were blacks, Jews, and Italians who would would pick on anyone who was timid or unassuming.

Robin Hall
Atlanta, Georgia

The resentment felt by Ying Ma regarding her treatment by black racists is understandable. She is also correct in criticizing Asian civil rights groups for failing to speak out against this type of bigotry. Still, her situation could be much worse.

Like Asians, whites also face the powerful sting of black racism. Yet there is not one politician, religious leader, or academic who speaks out against this. On the contrary, there are thousands of white academics, journalists, politicians, celebrities, and religious leaders who urge white Americans to face their own racism and acknowledge that they are privileged because of their skin color.

As the crime statistics in the same issue (INDICATORS) show, whites are routinely targeted by blacks. It is ridiculous to believe there is no racial motive behind the disparity in black-on-white and white-on-black crime. If Asian leaders ever do find the courage to fight black racism, perhaps they will remember that other groups need protection against it as well.

James P. Lubinskas
Falls Church, Virginia

I took great interest in Ying Ma's article. As a middle-class African American in his twenties, I am deeply apologetic for any racial discrimination Ma has received during her time in the States. It is a plight I wish upon no one, but one I believe has developed out of an inability to empathize with one another.

As African Americans, we are so caught up in our own struggles for acceptance in mainstream society that we rarely devote time or energy to the plight of other minorities. One underlying issue Ma failed to expound upon is how quickly other races can assimilate, while blacks as a culture have been pushing through this proverbial ceiling with limited success for hundreds of years. This all becomes a thorn in the side of the black community and is the catalyst for the divisiveness.

As a minority community, we should begin not so much comparing our differences, but assessing our similarities and strengths, so that we can share these attributes with one another and achieve a stronger, more unified America.

D. Timothy Williams
Vienna, Virginia

Your January/February issue "Is America Turning a Corner?" had little to say about feminism, whose "accomplishments" include the following:

- A man now has no legal standing regarding abortion decisions, even if the mother of the child is his wife.
- Under the guise of curbing domestic violence, feminists have abrogated constitutional requirements of due process. As a result, false allegations in child custody disputes have become the rule, not the exception.
- Feminists have curtailed freedom of speech in the workplace and on college campuses.
- Women now do appreciably better than men on almost every measure of educational attainment and health status. Despite this fact, feminists continue to lobby for expansion of Title IX education programs and women's health programs. Their success will tend to place men at even greater disadvantage.

Indeed, feminists increasingly envision a "male-free" society. In *Reweaving the Web of Life: Feminism and Nonviolence,* well-known feminist author Sally Miller Gearhart advocates that the number of males be reduced to 10 percent of the population (just enough to propagate the species).

Clearly, feminists have arrived at a vision that is sharply at odds with the aspirations and principles of most Americans. Any discussion of the state of America should come to grips with this unsettling fact.

Edward E. Bartlett
Rockville, Maryland

The American Enterprise welcomes your comments. Send to "The Mail," The American Enterprise, 1150 17th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. Or fax to (202) 862-5867. Or e-mail TheAmericanEnterprise@compuserve.com. Please include your address and phone number. Published letters may be edited for length and clarity.

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I found the January/February BIRD'S EYE most interesting and helpful. I doubt that we've reached a critical turning point, though I'm grateful for the optimistic point of view.

Witnessing the problems within our schools, as well as the relativism and indifference that pervades our society, is depressing. I recently attempted to buy gift subscriptions of magazines with religious viewpoints for a few of our local schools and was summarily rejected. My intentions were good, though my viewpoint, according to school officials, was off the mark.

Schools will permit magazines advocating all types of perverse views, but will not allow journals presenting religious topics. It's no wonder our educational system in America is at a standstill. It may be that we are turning a corner, but it seems we have a tremendous amount of work to do if we are to reclaim a society that is this far gone.

Lawrence Andrade
Swampscott, Massachusetts

I am grateful for the latest issue on trends in America and wish that you could do more visuals like this for pastors and community leaders who apply what you write.

Norm Brinkley
Ontario, California

The trends *TAE* reports in the January/February issue are both surprising and encouraging. Perhaps from a cyclic view of history they could have been anticipated. Still, they are welcome. I hope the expectations generated are not premature, however.

Our present problems with sexual promiscuity come from allowing our instincts to govern our actions. But "If it feels good do it" is not a formula for the survival of our society.

John Baugher
Norman, Oklahoma

As a female baby boomer, I want to compliment your January/February issue. I completely agree with the statements made by your "Year in Review" gathering—Lucianne Goldberg, Mark Steyn, and Andrew Ferguson. I have never been as dismayed by our government, media, and public opinion as I am today.

I must distinguish myself from today's feminists. Not all single career women (like myself) are poor victims who need Bill Clinton's help. There are intelligent women out there, educated and caring, who enjoy being treated like ladies and appreciate the differences between men and women—in fact, we don't want to be like men! Just because I think this way does not mean I am a doormat, far from it. Clinton has completely demeaned women, and it is sad to see so many of us blinded by his supposed charm and professed loyalty to women's rights.

Sue Hunt
Edmond, Oklahoma

I found Nina Shokraii Rees' article to be on the money and to the point ("School Reform," November/December). Education needs to be the next civil rights battle for black Americans. As a Washington, D.C. public school teacher, I see firsthand that parents want and need the same options that the Clintons and Gores have. I hope that the current Congress takes the issue of school choice seriously this time around.

Alan Patterson
Washington, D.C.

After enjoying your three most recent issues, especially the one on race, you may consider me a subscriber for life. I've come to realize through lesson and experience that truth is the single determinant of good writing.

My personal benchmark for the expression of this ideal came from the Ronald Reagan documentary broadcast over PBS last spring. Reagan's "retirement from public life" letter to the general public was said to possess the most pure traits of good writing: an unblinking, unfailing pursuit and reverence for truth. I consider it my very good fortune to have discovered precisely the same commitment and its bountiful fruits on the pages of *TAE*.

Robert M. Caggiano, Jr
Orlando, Florida

TAE should be commended for the variety of books it reviews. People often underestimate book reviews. *TAE* does a stellar job of covering both the most recent and often obscure books. I've seen everything from reviews on Woody Allen to presidential biographies to architecture guides.

The OFF THE SHELF section especially is a standard other magazines should imitate. Nothing wrong with reviewing old classics that we've long forgotten.

Stephen Klima
Playa del Rey, California

Ralph Reiland's SCAN item, "America Is Sick!" in your January/February issue is excellent. No magazine has given sufficient attention to the Labor Party or its "sister" socialist group: Campaign for America's Future.

I. Martin
Arlington, Texas

Your January/February SIDELIGHTS item on Singapore's House of Mao restaurants, where waiters wear Liberation Army uniforms, served as a painful reminder of the starvation and death in China during the Mao era.

Jordan C. Fan
Upper Marlboro, Maryland

Yours is the best American magazine of culture, business, and politics.

I emigrated to the United States from the Soviet Union in 1974 and realized I'd made the biggest mistake of my life: I failed to learn English. Thus I arrived unprepared to pick up on my thriving journalistic career or to continue a lifelong habit of reading. (Of course, I was a conservative and in time a Republican. All my former countrymen preach less government and more individual enterprise.)

Not wanting to give up on reading altogether, I designed an awkward, time-consuming solution. Every night, after the dinner dishes were washed and the two toddlers safely packed away in their beds, I'd spread the local paper on the table and read it from beginning to end, using the dictionary.

Now I have *TAE*. Enticing and vigorous. Full of intellectual energy and fresh ideas. Unafraid to swim against the mainstream, yet wise enough to present the mainstream before arguing against it. Spreading the wonderful truth that America is a never-ending project in progress.

Thank you and God bless.

Dmitri Ostrovsky
Charlotte, North Carolina

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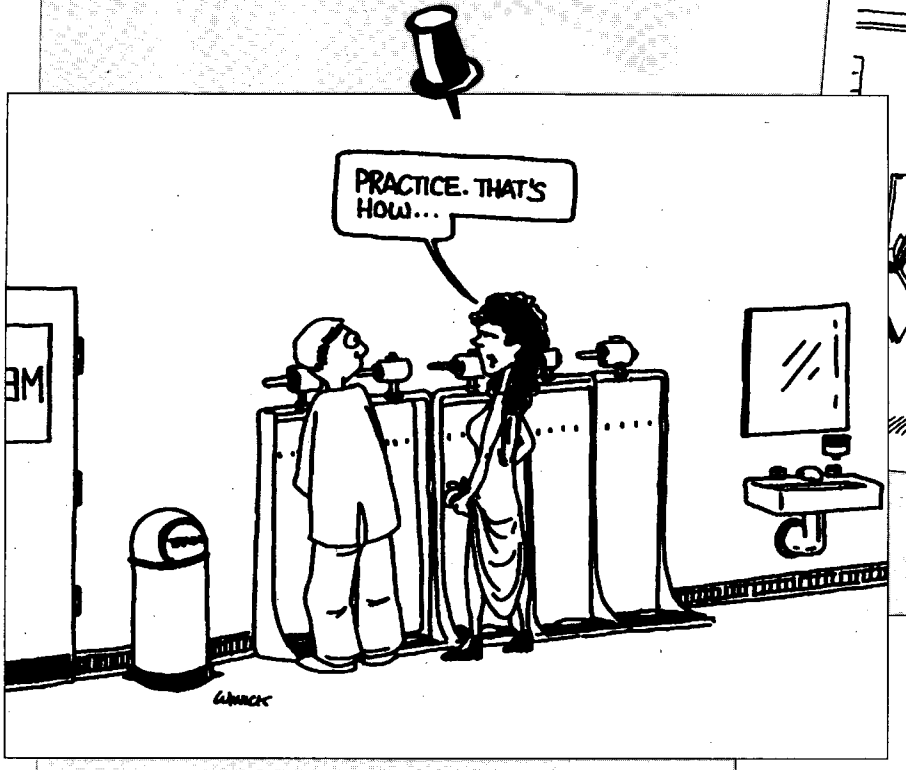

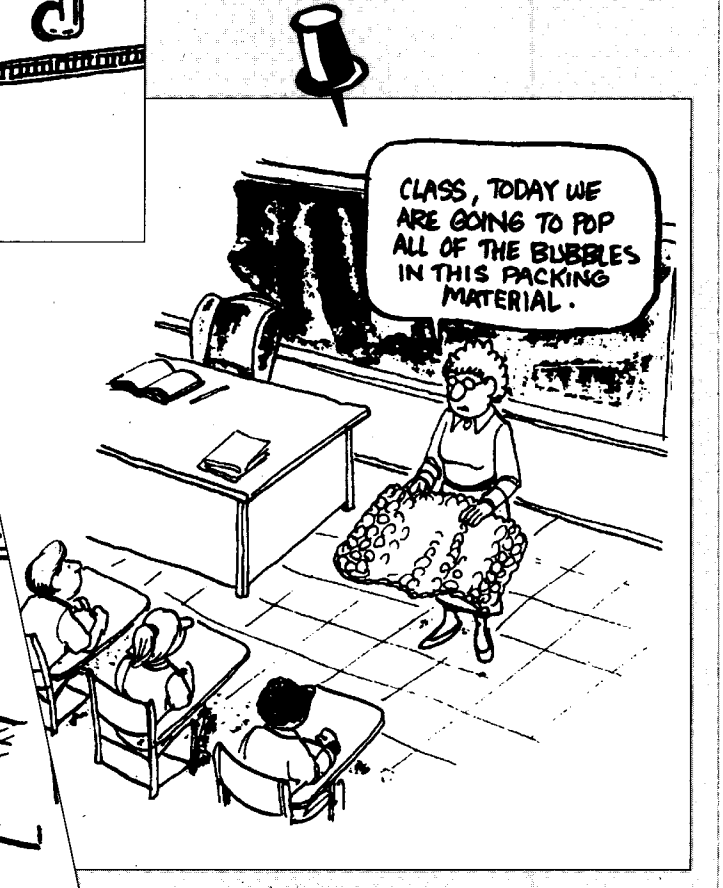

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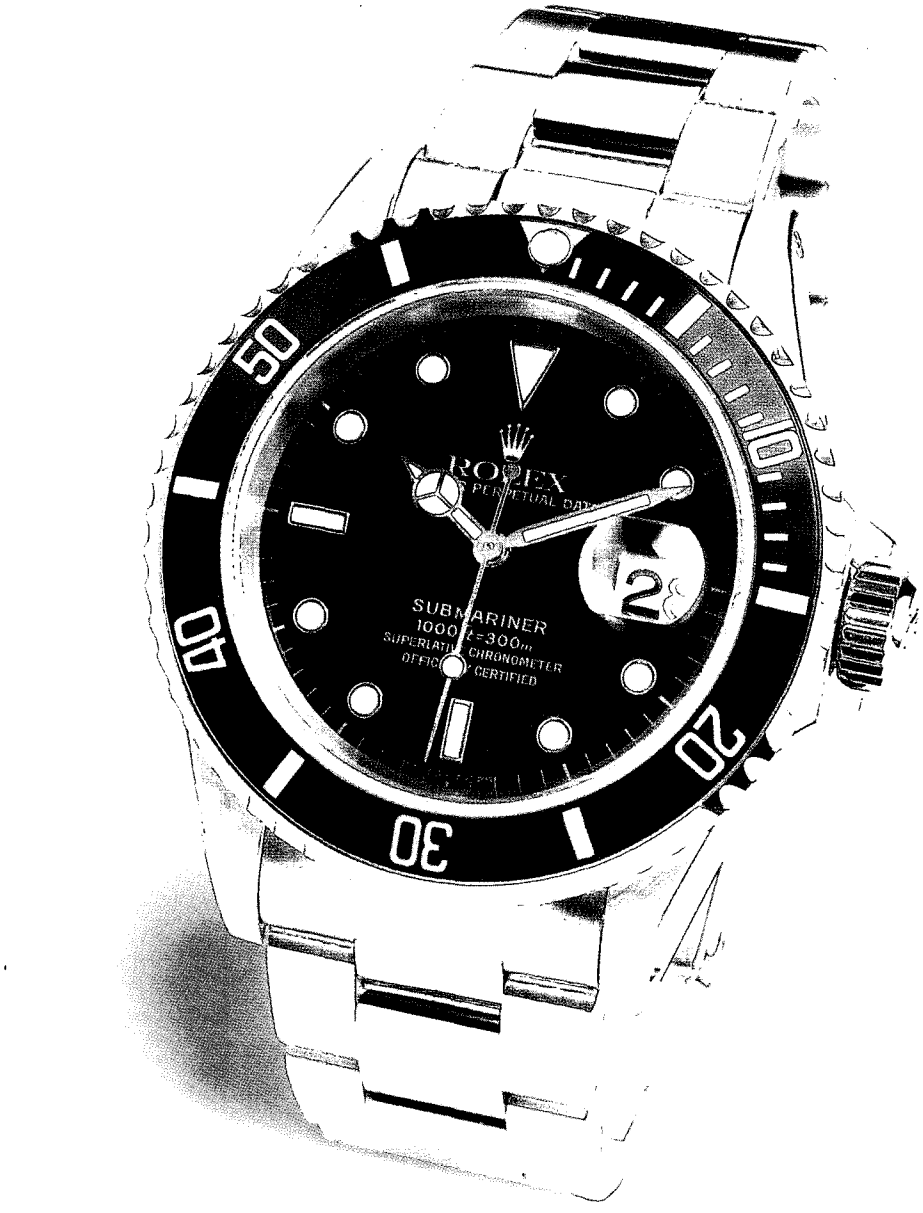
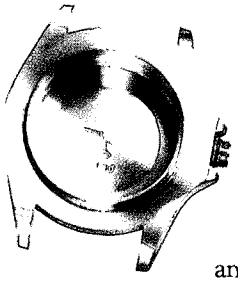


A strong case.

Just in case.



A Rolex is not only handsome, it is extremely rugged, and the key is its trademark Oyster case sculpted from 18kt gold or stainless steel. The case, combined with the synthetic sapphire crystal and patented Triplock winding crown, creates a virtually impenetrable miniature vault which, for this Submariner, is pressure-proof to 1,000 feet. Its legendary durability has made it the standard of excellence among divers, and is just one reason why this timepiece grows even more impressive the deeper you delve into it.

Rolex Oyster Perpetual Submariner Date in 18kt gold and stainless steel with matching Oyster Fliplock bracelet. For the name and location of an Official Rolex Jeweler near you, please call 1-800-36ROLEX. Rolex, ♛, Oyster Perpetual, Submariner, Oyster, Fliplock and Triplock are trademarks.

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She rocketed to the top of the high-tech world by helping transform a nerdy programming language at Sun into the buzzword of the Web. She even named it. Java. Fiercely independent, she then set out to co-found one of the hottest software startups, *Marimba*. Delivering the next generation of Internet technology to a host of blue-chip clients. Fearless entrepreneurs like Kim Polese find a kindred spirit in Forbes. The business magazine that delivers a point of view. Not conventional wisdom.

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